

IMAGES OF A PROMISED LAND IN NORWEGIAN
AND SWEDISH EMIGRANT NOVELS

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DECLARATION

I, Dana Caspi, declare that this thesis is my own work.

Edinburgh, 1.5.2000

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the use of emigration as a literary theme in Norwegian and Swedish novels. Although generally accepted as realistic narratives without a fixed political or ideological agenda, the basic hypothesis presented here is that the images employed in literary descriptions of emigration are in fact determined by authors' attitudes towards actual emigration. These attitudes are, in turn, occasionally influenced by the authors' perceived role as aides in the creation of a national identity. In general, Norwegian and Swedish authors write for those who did not emigrate, and shape their views on those who did. Reading the emigrant novel as a text with a 'national' agenda is by no means the only possible interpretation of this type of novel. However, this approach has been chosen for this thesis since one of its aims is to attempt to unearth some of the emigrant novel's underlying ideological preoccupations.

The study is divided into four main chapters. In the opening chapter an overview of the historical phenomenon of emigration is presented in order to set the study in its appropriate historical context. Since there is a tendency to read the novels discussed in the following chapters as reliable historical accounts, some tensions between fact and fiction are also being noted. In Chapter Two the literary language used in the narration of emigration is explored. Special emphasis is placed on biblical images and their significance in the context of New World rhetoric. The role of the Norse past as a source of images for emigration and colonisation is also examined. In Chapter Three the term 'emigrant novel' is introduced and discussed. This is followed by a thematic analysis of a selection of texts with the aim of providing as broad a picture as possible of the treatment of emigration as a literary theme in Norway and Sweden. In Chapter Four a close examination of three core texts – Vilhelm Moberg's *Emigrant* epic (1949-1959), Alfred Hauge's *Cleng Peerson* trilogy (1961-1965) and Selma Lagerlöf's *Jerusalem* (1901-1902) – builds towards a conclusion regarding the essential ingredients of the Scandinavian emigrant novel.

Rather than aiming for an unambiguous conclusion, this thesis highlights and investigates recurring patterns. Since the majority of the texts discussed here are set in rural areas, the most important of these patterns is a preoccupation with the agrarian ideal. This is linked to the role of the emigrant novel as a conveyer of national values, which in the Scandinavian context often contain a strong national-romantic element and hence a tendency to apotheosise the independent farmer and the rustic lifestyle. Although the emphasis on this lifestyle can be explained with the indisputable fact that it was a dominant feature in the actual emigration/immigration drama, its glorification often exceeds credible limits.

Since a novel about emigration by definition implies separation from the homeland, while its characters are presented as emblems of national virtues, a certain gap may appear between what is perceived as patriotic loyalty and the act of emigration. However, many authors solve this ideological discrepancy by presenting national values not as the most significant loss incurred on the immigrants, but rather as the precious imports they bring with them to the receiving country.

INTRODUCTION

Mobility and large-scale migration are commonly associated with the modern era, starting at the end of the 15th Century with voyages of discovery and conquest of the so-called New World, and accelerating in the 18th and 19th Centuries. Mobility is also largely, but not entirely, dependent on the gradual improvement in means of transport and communications. It is with big sailing ships, steamers or jumbo jets that we envisage the movement of large numbers of people over vast distances. On the other hand, migration as a phenomenon is as old as the history of mankind, or the history of nature itself. Under various combinations of circumstances migration will invariably take place – whether driven by an intrinsic longing for warmer or cooler climates, or a necessary movement towards more abundant hunting grounds or grazing pastures. It may be the result of restlessness, or a sense of homelessness and alienation, experiences associated mainly, but not exclusively, with modern developments such as industrialisation and urbanisation. More commonly emigration follows the devastation brought about by ‘famine, war, totalitarian regimes, epidemics and other disasters such as imperialistic domination’.¹ In the 19th Century, it was the belief in improved material and social conditions that drove millions away from Europe to the New World.

A fascination with mobility and movement as a universal phenomenon triggered my interest in the more particular circumstances of Scandinavian emigration in the 19th Century, specifically from Norway and Sweden, since emigration from Denmark was on a smaller scale and therefore less prominent as a literary theme. In 1974, Dorothy Burton Skårdal published her comprehensive study *The Divided Heart. Scandinavian Immigrant Experience through Literary Sources*, in which she uses fictional accounts to outline the history of emigration. Following her example, from the outset fiction will provide the basis for many of the observations made in this study, although historical data will be used as well. However, rather than studying the history of emigration my focus was shifted towards the pictures prospective emigrants painted of their longed-for places, and the way in which these pictures were translated into

words. This study is concerned with a specific period of migration that shares several features with other 'migration-events', but is also unique because the target place, although unfamiliar, was perceived by the majority of Europeans as a 'known' place. Since biblical images such as the Promised Land were central in the rhetoric of the New World, this New World was seen as the fulfilment of an ancient dream.

While for most Europeans emigrating to the newly-discovered parts of the world was an entirely new experience, tied as it is to historical developments in the modern era, many Scandinavians view this matter quite differently. Although conclusive archaeological evidence was not available at the time, among the learned classes in Scandinavia it was widely accepted that their Norse ancestors have made a similar journey to the New World as early as the 10th Century. Until fairly recently, historical accounts of Scandinavian emigration to America included typical phrases such as the following, taken from Leola Nelson Bergmann's *Americans from Norway* (1950):

'The story of the coming of the people from the land of Thor to the American forests and plains has more than one beginning [...] We must turn back to the days of the Norse vikings and the sagas to find the story of the first Norwegian family and the birth of the first white child on American soil.'²

Although the Norwegian and Swedish societies of the 19th Century were devoutly Christian, in some regions under strong pietistic influence, the temptation to draw upon images of the heathen past sometimes proved irresistible for historians, journalists and authors. Hence emigration narratives provide an interesting mixture of images. Whereas the literary use of biblical imagery is entirely predictable, and the images themselves are often platitudinous, their presence in modern and often secular texts such as novels is somewhat ambiguous, since the universal values they represent are at times contrary to the specific national values, expressed through the use of Norse images, these novels convey.

Throughout this study no particular distinction between earlier authors and more contemporary ones will be made, despite the fact that a difference obviously exists between those who write about emigration *as it is happening*, thus using literature to

express their views on a current phenomenon, whether critical, approving or ambivalent, and those who treat emigration as a *historical* phenomenon, a *de facto* event that cannot be halted, encouraged or altered, only analysed and presented from a particular angle. The time at which a novel was written is often clearly reflected in it. However, the reason for this non-chronological approach is found in the literary material itself, in which no clear gap in the type of imagery employed may be observed between earlier and later novels. Nor can a clear-cut distinction be made between the type of characters that inhabit older and more recent texts. Hence the historical context in which these novels were written will be commented upon only briefly and in relation to some, not all, texts, depending on its relevance to the method of analysis chosen for this thesis. The intention is not to undermine the value of existing classifications and distinctions, but rather to attempt and present a more 'holistic' approach that puts greater emphasis on emerging patterns in a body of works rather than on differences arising from comparisons between individual works.

To a certain extent geographical distinctions will also be overlooked, both in relation to the country of origin (Norway and Sweden) and the receiving country. Although historically North America was the destination preferred by the vast majority of emigrants, a trend reflected in the literature, the study will also make reference to emigration to other parts of the world. However, since one of the main themes examined here is the departure and separation from the homeland, the degree to which these are affected by the destination will inevitably highlight the existence of such geographical distinctions.

Although literature may be regarded as a mirror of real life, it is also a mediator between the randomness of reality, or chaos, and the human desire for order. Whereas real people emigrate for a variety of reasons, some unknown to them, others beyond their control, fictional characters appear to emigrate for one reason, or due to a set of defined causes, and often with a clear goal. Literature fills human activity and behaviour – and in this particular case emigration – with understandable meaning, and in many instances this meaning is idealised or encapsulated into a single unambiguous sentiment or experience. An inability to assimilate caused by an

almost crippling attachment to the homeland is a frequent motif in emigration narratives, and the presentation of emigration as a tragic experience is a literary convention many authors adhere to. It is therefore worthwhile asking whether the literary emigration experience is not a product of creative national reasoning rather than an authentic portrayal of a complex set of human emotions.

This thesis is in itself a migratory experiment. Its point of departure is the desire – or the inherent need – to move freely between fields, to settle for a while and then move on, or perhaps to settle and to move simultaneously. I have taken the liberty to roam freely in different geographical and academic spheres, in search of that illusive ‘Promised Land’ of total coherence. Just as the fictional characters in the novels treated in this study will inevitably discover that the longed-for place cannot exist in reality, my longing for an unambiguous conclusion is bound to end in frustration. In both cases, though, it is the journey itself that emerges as more significant than the final, and non-existent, destination.

¹ *Encyclopedia of World Problems and Human Potential*. Edited by the Union of International Associations (Brussels). Munich: K.G. Saur, 2nd edition, 1986 (no page numbers).

² Leola Nelson Bergmann, *Americans from Norway*. Philadelphia and New York: J.B. Lippincott Company, 1950, 13.

CHAPTER ONE: CHANGING PLACES

1. MOTIVATION AND MOVEMENT

Emigration in the modern era, reaching its peak at the end of the 19th Century and the beginning of the 20th, is the greatest movement of people in history. A total of fifty million Europeans left for the New World,¹ thirty five million of whom emigrated to the north of the American continent.²

The widespread assumption that Europeans emigrated first and foremost to improve their material condition is indisputable. 'A better lot – that is the alpha and the omega of the emigrant', quotes the Norwegian-American historian Theodore Blegen from a book titled *Interessante Beretninger om Nordamerika, skildrede af En Reisende* which was published in Norway in 1852.³ It is, however, almost impossible to explain such a vast movement of people on purely economic grounds. The answer must be that the majority of emigrants in one way or another shared the conviction that America is the Promised Land, a concept understood primarily, but not solely, in material terms. A certain spiritual – if not religious – element was also associated with the act of emigration, which could lead to a fulfilment of a promise, a prophecy, or a deep-seated longing. Since biblical imagery was an integral part of everyday rhetoric in the 19th Century, one must be careful not to over-interpret its importance in a non-religious and non-literary context. It is nonetheless interesting to note that virtually all literary texts about emigration, and some older historical accounts, suggest that even emigration driven by purely economic considerations was perceived in spiritual or ideological terms. This is not to say that spiritually or ideologically motivated emigration is necessarily the opposite of economic emigration,⁴ only that the rhetoric sometimes conceals or beautifies more mundane motives. The transformation of concepts such as the Promised Land, which within Christian tradition were used only metaphorically, into concrete goals, is an indication of the revolutionary changes taking place in the collective consciousness of Europeans, of which mass-emigration to the New World is but one expression.

In the following an attempt will be made to outline the historical phenomenon of emigration, both the general European and the particular Scandinavian. Terminology borrowed from the social sciences, namely the 'push' and 'pull' factors, will be used to explain emigration, with emphasis on its psychological aspects, as preparation for the discussion on the phenomenon's literary interpretations in subsequent chapters. Although this chapter is based on historical documentation, frequent references will be made to literature, both general trends and specific texts.

Changing Perceptions of Time and Space

The movement away from Europe is one aspect of a more comprehensive process of spiritual splintering and scattering, which began with the Reformation. It reflects, on the one hand, a longing to return to a pure form of life, to go back to the source. In religious terms, this source is the biblical text. In social terms, it is a simple, even ascetic, way of life. On the other hand, implicit in this longing is a desire for something unfamiliar and new. Typical of this paradoxical process is the fact that in order to achieve its goal – a return to a state of purity based on the 'original' (in the sense of 'primary' or 'initial') – one has to venture into the unknown. One has to try something 'original' in the more modern sense of the word, meaning 'novel or fresh', 'such has not been done or produced before'.⁵

One way of explaining this paradox is to look at changing perceptions of time and space. While it is practically impossible to know how individuals perceived time in the past – and indeed to prove that time perception of individuals has changed at all – it is generally accepted that before the scientific theories of the modern era were developed, be it Evolution or the Big Bang, time was perceived as cyclical. Mythological narratives reflected this notion by emphasising creation, destruction and revival; nature demonstrated it with a rhythmical change in seasons, and life confirmed it by moving in cycles of birth and death. The question of rebirth (or afterlife), which did not appear to follow a cyclical pattern, was solved by pushing its occurrence to a different dimension of time. If life was a repetition of past events, there seemed to be little sense in re-enacting them in a different setting. In other

words, migration to another place was rarely contemplated, as it did not appear to change one's course of life.

In his book *Topophilia* (1974), the geographer Yi-Fu Tuan links the cyclical time perception, prevalent until Newton's day, with what he calls the 'vertical cosmos' – a space perception based on the heaven/earth axis, with limited horizontal knowledge. Most people had a closer contact with the heaven above and the earth below than with the neighbouring village. By the 17th Century, though, things were rapidly changing. With the 'discovery' of the New World, geographical boundaries shifted, and with them notions of space and time. 'Long-distance travel and migrations may in themselves have had an effect in breaking up cyclical time and the vertical cosmos, substituting for them linear time and horizontal space',⁶ writes Tuan. Or, as Gillian Tindall writes in *Countries of the Mind. The Meaning of Places to Writers* (1991): 'The potential landscape, or landscapes, of many people's lives expanded greatly', but she adds: 'at the same time, in another sense, the world shrank: towns that had been several days' distance from each other for centuries became only a few hours apart, continents that had been separated by months at sea were reachable within mere weeks.'⁷ Of all the dramatic human experiences of modern times, this is perhaps one of the most significant. When linear time, horizontal space and a shrinking universe are translated into action, a more or less static society suddenly becomes mobile.

This mobility is an expression of the desire for a better life. Belief in the possibility of *actively* improving one's situation replaces an age-old acceptance of one's fate. New political and social thinking make it acceptable to want change. There is, however, a price to pay, as Tuan notes: 'primitive and traditional peoples lived in a vertical, rotary and richly symbolical world, whereas modern man's world tends to be broad of surface, low of ceiling, nonrotary, aesthetic and profane.'⁸ This distinction can serve as a metaphor for the move from the Old World to the New, although it does not take into consideration the reactionary tendencies of humans in unfamiliar situations. Faced with a 'nonrotary' and 'profane' world many immigrants tried, and to a certain degree succeeded, in transferring a more symbolic (or vertical)

and traditional (or cyclical) attitude from the Old World to the New. In order to support this claim in the specific context of Scandinavian America, one needs to examine the background to emigration from Norway and Sweden in the 19th Century.

2. THE CHANGING IMAGE OF THE NEW WORLD

In his article "America: Symbol of a Fresh Start" (1980), Otto F. Kraushaar outlines the changing image of the New World in the eyes of Europeans. Following the early period during which it was believed to be an earthly paradise, rumours began circulating about the vicious temperament of the seemingly innocent natives and the natural horrors surrounding them. Scraps of information, distorted by time and re-telling, required a re-evaluation of the paradisiacal image. No longer an Elysian wonderland, but a weird and threatening landscape dominated by colossal icebergs, destructive tornadoes, earthquakes and blood-red northern lights, and teeming with snakes, giant tortoises and huge predatory fish. 'America seemed to the fainthearted a land where everything goes to dangerous extremes, a land of strange, hideous, and monstrous natural phenomena.'⁹

No wonder, then, that the 'discovery' of the New World did not immediately result in large crowds flocking out of the Old one. There were also more practical reasons. Emigration was not a real option for most people, because the empires that claimed the New World's territories as their own did not allow their subjects to move freely to the colonies. An important prerequisite for large-scale emigration is a shift from 'mercantilist' policies towards more liberal emigration policies, which reflect a growing awareness of the desires and needs of the population. In the 16th and 17th Centuries, European states viewed their subjects as providers of cheap labour; when needed they also served as soldiers or sailors. Population growth was therefore an indication of increasing power and influence, and for this reason emigration was restricted or prohibited. In some countries like Sweden, this 'mercantilist' attitude characterised policies throughout the 18th Century as well, with the repeated issuing of restrictions on emigration.¹⁰ As colonies were used primarily for trade, the European view of the New World, and of America in particular, was at first influenced not by the scale of the continent, but by its geographical position on the

Asiatic trade route.¹¹ More than wanting to travel to America, people were keen to use America as a means of bringing wealth to Europe. Only in the 18th Century did the continent's interior become appealing for its abundance of wildlife and minerals and its potential for sustaining a largely self-contained agricultural society.¹²

Notions about America were changing, and so was the imagery accompanying them. In his book *The Role of Place in Literature* (1984), Leonard Lutwack examines three types of images that dominated the European view of America: the Garden (Arcadia or Eden), the Wilderness, and a place of treasure – an Eldorado.¹³ While viewing the New World as a place of treasure is the poetic expression of imperialistic exploitation policies, beautified and refined even further with images of abundance and fertility, it is also a separate image of man's highest aspirations. It certainly appears more materialistic than the ideal of the Garden, but it can also be a *different* manifestation of the *same* old dream of a carefree life. In Eldorado wealth appears in the form of minerals, in the Garden it grows on trees. As for Wilderness, this image seems to have very little to do with either gold or fruit, and yet, like the Garden, it symbolises purity; and like Eldorado it stands for wealth – a spiritual wealth, or a wealth of emptiness. America's wilderness pulled like a magnet because of and despite 'its savagery, its boundlessness, its feeling of terrifying limitlessness, its uncontaminated sense of space', as Clive Bush writes in *The Dream of Reason* (1977).¹⁴ While the imagery could be said to be an expression of different temperaments and ideologies, it can also be viewed as reflecting and corresponding to political and economic developments, with Eldorado being the oldest of the three preconceptions, based on a fascination with the riches of the land rather than with the land itself. It was later replaced by imagery related to the Wilderness and the Garden, both of which express a growing interest in the land itself.

In Europe, the ideas of the Enlightenment transformed the *desire* for economic, religious and political freedom into a *demand* for such rights. From the middle of the 18th Century onwards, Europeans turned their attention towards America, where white settlers on the East Coast appeared to be successful in establishing a society based on the principles of freedom and equality.¹⁵ Europe began to represent the old,

corrupt and rigid while America stood for everything that is new. A 'new heaven and a new earth' promises John in the Book of *Revelation* (21:1), and when religious revivals swept across Europe, it seemed that the prophecy was about to be fulfilled. Puritan, Quaker, Shaker and Mennonite are but a few examples of movements that suffered persecution in the Old World, took advantage of the freedom offered in the New World and attributed spiritual, or in some cases specific Christian symbolism, to this liberating experience.

Remnants of the dream about America as a treasure land, an 'Eldorado', still dominated the visions of many. Reality was, of course, very different. Only a small fraction of the immigrants made a fortune, although many more succeeded in settling and earning enough to sustain themselves, especially in farming, and always through *hard work*. The notion of success through hard work soon replaced the dream of instant wealth, but for many this spelt disillusionment, and they returned to their homelands, or resigned themselves to a life that was less lavish than they had expected. America quickly became mundane, a daily reality not significantly different from the European one, mainly because the general attitude of the colonisers in America, as in other parts of the world, was to transplant European culture in the newly acquired land. Lutwack notes that 'no new relation to land was contemplated. As European settlers saw it, the only choice was to convert the wilderness into a copy of their native lands or extract what they could from the wilderness and leave it.'¹⁶

There are, however, several unique features to this colonising venture. First, it changed people's notions about mobility, for it implied not only a single change of habitat (from Europe to America), but a lifestyle dominated by movement. As no particular place in America was important from a historical, cultural or religious point of view, the immigrants exchanged their former attachment to a *single* place for an attachment to a *type* of place, preferably new, fertile but uncultivated. Such places were found in abundance west of the former British colonies on the Atlantic Coast.

By the 1840s, the two central images of the West, the Wilderness and the Garden – obviously relating to the very same place, the former denoting its current state, the latter its potential – were translated into two types of lifestyles, answering the needs of two types of people. The one was the Wild West of pathfinders and hunters, the other was the increasingly domesticated West of farmers. The latter was inhabited by the despised social category of hard-working people for whom the sophisticated and established East devised the myth of the safety-valve. Its aim was to rid society of its weakest members, ‘orphans, destitute children, members of lower social classes, and foreign immigrants’,¹⁷ by sending them to cultivate the West. Physical work was never a Romantic ideal, as Henry David Thoreau, a representative of Eastern intelligentsia, expressed it in *Walden* (1854): ‘It makes but little difference whether you are committed to a farm or the county jail.’¹⁸ Ironically, the same social circles that scorned the hard-working farmer celebrated the liberating air of the Wild West, where the adventurous heroes of American romanticism roamed, as noted by Henry Nash Smith in his book *Virgin Land. The American West as Symbol Myth* (1950).¹⁹ However, for political and economic reasons the settlers who gradually transformed the wilderness into a blossoming garden were to become the heroes of American society. It was their way of life that appealed to European immigrants, who at any rate could not have known enough about American attitudes to distinguish between a ‘true’ pioneer and a simple thrall of the soil.

3. AMERICA AND SCANDINAVIA

For two hundred years, following a brief colonisation attempt in Pennsylvania – the symbolic New Sweden along the Delaware River – lasting from 1638 to 1665,²⁰ America’s fame as an emerging prosperous nation filtered into Sweden, although its people had very little first-hand knowledge of the New World. Apart from the occasional traveller, America was, in the eyes of practically all Swedes, a vast unknown territory, full of potential but also extremely hazardous. The same could be said of ordinary Norwegians, again excluding those sailors and a handful of merchants who visited and even settled in America. The lack of reliable information created a repelling/enticing picture of a heathen place, populated by savage tribesmen and beasts, which was at the same time an abundant garden, a paradise

regained. In most cases this contradictory image mirrored not only the fragmented and confused information gradually seeping through to Scandinavia, but also the needs, fears and hopes of those who received it.²¹

The Trailblazers of Norwegian Emigration

The course of emigration from Norway and Sweden is on the whole similar, although from Norway it started earlier, and in a somewhat different socio-political climate. National-romanticism, which dominated Nordic politics and culture in the first half of the 19th Century, and was a strong influence up to roughly 1870, inspired poets and politicians to present the end of Danish rule and the Eidsvold Constitution of 1814 as the opening of a magnificent epoch in Norwegian history. However, although the Constitution guaranteed the basis for future independence, the daily lives of society's poor did not change dramatically. At the end of the Napoleonic wars the economy was frail, and a surge of religious awakenings of the kind that often follows an economic crisis was sweeping across the country. The 1814 Constitution made Lutheranism the state religion, reinforcing the *Konventikkelplakaten* (Conventicle Act) of 1741 with its intolerant attitude towards non-Lutheran denominations and lay-movements. The central figure in the most important pietistic awakening in Norway was Hans Nielsen Hauge (1771-1824), founder of an indigenous lay-movement that attracted society's less privileged members. Hauge's struggle for freedom of worship cannot be separated from his struggle for social and economic reform. In much the same way it is impossible to distinguish between the religious and the economic push-factors that affected those who, inspired by him in their quest for freedom, went a step further and emigrated to the New World. It is known that many of Hauge's followers were among the first to emigrate.

Although individual Norwegians visited America from as early as the 17th Century, it is traditionally accepted that emigration started with the sailing of the *Restauration* from Stavanger in 1825. Norway's rugged west coast is conveniently the location from which the Vikings sailed on their voyages of exploration and trade, and writers of both history and fiction are tempted to draw parallels between them and the first

emigrants, who also came from the south-west coast.²² The Quaker Emigration, as the 1825 adventure came to be known, was the first organised group emigration from Norway to the New World. Approximately fifty people, a few of them Quakers and the majority Quaker sympathisers, many of them Haugeans, sailed to New York in the hope of finding freedom of worship. The key figure in this episode was Cleng Peerson, also known as the 'Father of Norwegian Emigration to America'. Although information about him is sketchy, it is widely accepted that he was not a Quaker or a Haugean, nor was he motivated by self-interest. His somewhat enigmatic figure, central to Alfred Hauge's study of the Quaker Emigration (see Chapter Four), is at least in one sense associated with a typical feature of the phenomenon in its early stages, namely the emigration of groups led by a charismatic figure.

The immigrants settled first by the shores of Lake Ontario, but in 1834 a large number of them moved to Fox River, Illinois. This was the beginning of the Scandinavian westward movement, and the Fox River colony, which by 1836 was a flourishing settlement serving as a mother-colony for expansion to the West, the Northwest and the Southwest, is an important landmark in the history of Norwegian pioneering in America. Some scholars have compared the first emigrants on the *Restauration* to the Pilgrim Fathers who left England in 1620 on board the *Mayflower*. While the literature favours the theme of religious intolerance, a Marxist-inspired interpretation concentrates on economic motives. It has been claimed that those first emigrants were 'harassed' rather than 'persecuted' for their religious beliefs, which in itself is not grounds enough for emigration, and the fact that the majority of them were poor shows that their motivation was rather prosaic. Whatever their real incentives, the 'sloopers', as they came to be known, demonstrated to other Norwegians that emigration was a realistic option, although the significance of this small group emigration in relation to the greater waves that followed has been challenged.

Although mass emigration started only after the end of the American Civil War (1865), there was a peak with over 35,000 emigrants from Norway in the 1850s. Blamed for spreading the 'America Fever' were the letters the early immigrants sent

home. The America Letters – those sent by immigrants to family, friends and even newspapers at home – were first and foremost concerned with material conditions, but in their overall enthusiastic tone references were often made to the democratic laws, freedom of worship, equality and the general youthful and optimistic nature of American society, although the need for hard work in order to survive was always stressed. The letters were copied and circulated, thus helping to bring America to the awareness of a growing number of Scandinavians. There were also immigrants who returned for a visit, most notably Knud Anderson Slogvig, who visited Norway in 1835 (having emigrated in 1830), and paraded himself as living proof of the success of Norwegians in the United States. Thus, a tradition of emigration was being established, and certain regions with better connections to the already existing Norwegian communities in America, such as the three southwestern *amter* (counties) of Stavanger, South and North Bergenhus, and the two south central *amter*, Bratsberg and Buskerud, had higher emigration rates than the rest of the country. In later decades the spread became more even.

Early Swedish Emigration

From the 1830s and until the beginning of mass emigration from Sweden in 1868, a trickle of emigrants, usually in groups, ventured out to the New World. These groups were often ideologically motivated – critical of Sweden, and attracted to the United States, where democracy and republicanism also implied greater economic freedom.²³ Although the emigrants during this pioneer period were mostly farmers, they were not necessarily the poorest in society, unlike the dispossessed Scottish crofters and Irish peasants, who were forced off the land and out of the country by their landlords, the authorities, or hunger. The Irish Potato Famine (1845-49) was the most significant push factor in Irish emigration.²⁴ The fact that many Scandinavians *chose* to emigrate, as opposed to those who were forced to do so, may explain why authors tend to emphasise the ideological and idealistic aspects of their actions. In *The Divided Heart*, Dorothy Burton Skårdal finds confirmation for this trend in Scandinavian-American literature: ‘Ambition and self-respect were only two of several personality traits attributed to the majority of emigrants in this literature. Most were also accredited with initiative, resoluteness, and determination. Above all,

they were portrayed as feeling deprived in the Old Country of opportunity to realize their potential, of freedom to behave in a host of ways as they saw fit.’²⁵

The emigration of the ‘Prophet’ Erik Janson and his followers, known as the Jansonists or Jansonites, is the most obvious example of group emigration from Sweden, although in many ways the exception, and possibly the only case of religious persecution as the sole push factor.²⁶ In the early 1840s Janson, a flour salesman and lay-preacher, was travelling in Hälsingland and the neighbouring provinces, where he established strong ties with many *läsare* – members of a lay-movement that rejected the sole authority of the state church in matters of biblical interpretation and administration of the sacraments. The Conventicle Act of 1726 prohibited all religious assemblies, and the *läsare* often found themselves in conflict with the clergy. The Jansonites went a step further in their criticism of state religion, and took to burning books such as the writings of Luther and Arndt. Janson was arrested and imprisoned on several occasions, and his followers suffered persecution. It was during his time in prison that Janson began to contemplate emigration, and once the decision was taken, Olof Olsson, a devoted follower of Janson, went to America late in 1845 in order to find suitable land and prepare for the arrival of the rest. Incidentally, the motif of the ‘spy’ (in the biblical sense) also appears in accounts about the Quaker Emigration from Norway. The chosen site for settlement was in Henry County, Illinois, where Janson and his family arrived in 1846, after escaping another term in prison. The last wave of persecution had left the Jansonites in no doubt: they are an incarnation of the Israelites, oppressed in Egypt but led to safety in the Promised Land. Thus America becomes more than simply a safe haven for religious dissenters. It is the place where the New Jerusalem is about to be built. Bishop Hill (named after Biskopskulla, Janson’s birthplace in Uppland) attracted over a thousand people from Sweden, although the population of the colony never exceeded eight hundred at any time. Opting for a communal lifestyle, partly out of necessity and partly as the fulfilment of the sect’s ideal, the colony, after several trying years of poverty and disease, appeared to be thriving. But Janson’s autocratic leadership (or, according to some accounts, his deteriorating mental capacities) resulted in the sect’s disintegration. Bishop Hill collapsed in 1862. Janson himself

was murdered in 1850 by John Root, a Swedish immigrant married to Janson's cousin, but not a Jansonite himself.²⁷

The turmoil and violence surrounding the Bishop Hill experiment may have led the Swedish clergy to gloat over its failure, but for the rest of Swedish society, and especially those contemplating emigration, the failure sent a warning signal to anyone toying with the idea of communal life in the New World. The communal ideal was never particularly popular in Scandinavia, presumably because it clashed with the traditional value of private land ownership. Some, though, choose to attribute its lack of appeal to the individuality of Scandinavians, whose native landscapes imposed upon them a life of isolation. In 1849, after a visit to the "New American Phalanxtery" (*sic*) in New Jersey, Fredrika Bremer wrote: 'hellre ville jag leva i en backstuga på Sveriges kalaste gråstensberg, ensam med mig själv, på vatten och bröd (och potatis, som jag själv skulle koka) än i en falangstär i fetaste jordmån och mitt ibland medborgare och medborgarinnor – även så hyggliga som dessa här.'²⁸ In Chapter Four below an attempt will be made to illustrate the way in which literature reflects this rejection of communism (in the original sense of the word) by portraying the occasional spokesman for this ideal – Alfred Hauge's Cleng Peerson and Vilhelm Moberg's Danjel Andreasson – as not entirely in tune with the wishes of his people, or in the case of Selma Lagerlöf's Helgum, not in tune with the ideals of the author and hence the needs of the people.

4. MASS EMIGRATION

A European Phenomenon

From the foundation of the Virginia colony of Jamestown in 1607, small-scale emigration to America continued at a steady pace, with 90% of the immigrants coming from Great Britain.²⁹ Although the economic factor was never altogether absent, until the 1840s most Europeans emigrated because they were dissatisfied with the social, political and religious climate in their home countries. A distinction must also be made between temporary or permanent migration of traders, soldiers, clergymen and administrators³⁰ from imperial countries to their colonies, and the ideological or economic emigration of people from non-imperial countries.

Towards the middle of the 19th Century, industrialisation and urbanisation in Europe were leading to economic unrest. This was coupled with a population boom, the result of relative peace after the end of the Napoleonic wars (1814), and improved health and better nutrition, achieved mainly through the introduction and spread of the potato in European agriculture. Overpopulation put a strain on farmers who were already struggling to produce enough to feed their own families. It also meant that even those with jobs were badly paid. The first wave of large-scale emigration came in the 1840s-50s, with over four million emigrants, mostly from England, Scotland, Ireland and Germany.³¹ As mass emigration became a widespread phenomenon, it concentrated more and more on the *material* benefits of the New World, and less on the ideological. In the middle of the 19th Century, great social and political changes were taking place in Europe, for instance in the form of popular revolutions. Although these were crushed, the hope for social and political reform was no longer associated exclusively with America. The second major wave of immigrants, among them, for the first time, large numbers of Scandinavians, arrived between 1865 and 1873. Lured by an economic boom and the promise of free land in America, their emigration clearly marks the end of the ideological phase.

Mass Emigration from Norway and Sweden

It is estimated that between 1840 and 1930 approximately 1,250,000 Swedes emigrated to North America. In relative terms, Norway contributed a greater number with approximately 850,000 for the years 1825-1930,³² but in absolute terms Sweden tops the Scandinavian chart. Denmark trails behind with about 300,000 emigrants for the same period.

Fluctuation in emigration reflected changes in the American and European economies; crop failures in Europe and a boom in America led to increased emigration, which was encouraged by various immigration agents. The agents represented the federal government, local and state authorities in the United States, land companies, American industry and steamship lines. Many of them were American Swedes or Norwegians, either those working as official agents or as

private people, who wanted their friends and relatives near them. Scandinavians were renowned for their work ethic, and the American market, starved of working hands, considered them ideal immigrants. The theme of the honest and hardworking immigrant, as we shall see, is exploited to its fullest by Scandinavian authors, keen to glorify the contribution of their own ethnic group to the American economic success story. Compared with the impact of the agent activity, the America Letters seem to have had an even stronger influence on prospective emigrants. In general, these letters tended to emphasise the positive and conceal the negative. In literature, the common motif of the enthusiastic America Letter is often presented from the psychological angle; pride plays a decisive role in a character's decision to withhold worrying information.

Once the decision to leave was made, spring, the season when shortage of food was felt most acutely in the Nordic countries, was usually chosen as the time for departure. The winter was spent in preparation for the journey – storing up food, knitting, sewing and packing. Winter was also the time for bureaucratic and mental preparations. March, April and May were 'the gala season for emigration', as Blegen puts it.³³ Crossing the Atlantic Ocean in a sailboat, usually in appalling, cramped conditions, lasted between six to ten weeks. Passengers suffered from shortage of clean water and fresh, nutritious food, while hygiene standards were low. Many died on the way due to frequent outbreaks of typhoid fever and cholera. By the 1860s steamships were introduced on the transatlantic route, cutting down the length of the voyage to ten-twelve days. Once in America, railways made the inland journey safer and quicker. Emigration became less risky and more tempting, because the improvements in transport also significantly cut the cost of travel.

During the first wave of mass emigration from Scandinavia (1865-1873) the Frontier had moved west to Illinois, Wisconsin, Iowa and Minnesota. A fresh wave, lasting from 1880 until 1893, marks the peak years of Scandinavian emigration. The Frontier had now been pushed into the Plains States of Colorado, Nebraska, Kansas and the Dakotas, where many Swedes and Norwegians settled. With World War I European emigration came to a halt. During the war it was discovered that the

sympathies of the members in a non-homogenous society were difficult to control at a time of crisis, and in 1918 America's contribution to the Allies' victory resulted in a surge of nationalism. It was therefore decided, in the 1920s, to take measures to restrict immigration. A quota system was introduced, and although it favoured immigrants from Northern Europe, the 1929 Stock Market Crash and the Depression that followed in the 1930s made America less attractive than it had been. Mass emigration from Scandinavia thus ceased by 1930.

Group-emigration, typical of the pioneer-era and often consisting of whole families, soon made way for the movement of mainly young, unmarried people belonging to the agricultural proletariat – people whose prospects in the overcrowded countryside were limited or non-existent.³⁴ By 1890 direct emigration from the countryside appeared to be replaced by emigration from towns and industrial centres. The pattern emerging is that of a two-phase migration, first internal and then external. The majority of emigrants originally came from rural districts, but later generations had experienced industrialised, urbanised Sweden or Norway before leaving for America. The same process is mirrored in the life of the immigrants across the Atlantic. Until approximately 1900 the movement was predominantly westwards, into the agricultural settlements west of the Mississippi, and further inland. After the turn of the century, many Swedish immigrants settled in the industrial centres along the East Coast, thus completing their process of urbanisation – which started in Europe – in America. Although Scandinavian immigrants are usually associated with rural areas, as early as 1910 approximately 60% of Swedish immigrants lived in cities,³⁵ and the number has later increased. In his study *Bilden av Amerika i svensk prosafiktion 1890-1914* (1982) Lars Wendelius demonstrates that the literature reflects this trend by shifting its emphasis from rural settings to life in the big city.³⁶ Henning Berger's Chicago stories and novels, among them *Där ute* (1901), *Ysail* (1905) and *Bendel & Co.* (1910), are probably those that have best survived the test of time. When emigration became a historical fact the literature reverted to the romanticised view of the rural immigrant, and few literary accounts of life in the city were written *after* the period of mass emigration. Norwegian immigrants, on the other hand, remained predominantly in rural areas, and Norwegian novels mirror this trend.

Remigration was rare until the 1880s, because the nature of early emigration, involving the settling of whole families in rural areas, implied that the immigrants did not suffer as much from homesickness and rootlessness, and were more likely to be content in the new country. The prospect of another hazardous and extremely unpleasant journey in a sailboat was also a major deterrent before steamship Atlantic crossings became a cheap and convenient alternative. When large numbers of urbanised, already-uprooted working-class immigrants began arriving, remigration became more common, and finally surpassed emigration in 1930.³⁷

5. PUSH AND PULL FACTORS

Landscape and Character

Norway and Sweden are by no means small countries, but their areas of arable land and the size of the average holding appear minute compared with what America had to offer. In his slightly romanticised account, Blegen links the Scandinavian work ethic, and hence the aptitude of Scandinavian immigrants for pioneer life on the Western Frontier, to the harsh geographical conditions of the Scandinavian Peninsula, where a small amount of fertile soil demands constant hard work.³⁸ A similar idea is expressed by Selma Lagerlöf in *Nils Holgerssons underbara resa genom Sverige* (1906), in which she describes how the eager St. Peter is granted permission from God to complete the creation of Småland, but does so less ably than the master Himself. Saddened by what he sees God decides that only He, and not Peter, can create the right kind of inhabitants for this landscape: ‘Och så skapade Vår Herre smålänningen och gjorde honom kvick och förnöjsam och glad och flitig och tilltagsen och duktig, för att han skulle kunna skaffa sig sin bärning i sitt fattiga land.’³⁹ Incidentally, Lagerlöf takes a clear anti-emigration stand in *Nils Holgersson*, but she concedes that it was the infertile land that drove people to seek prosperity elsewhere, as the old woman tells her cow, Rödlinna, in “Den gamla bondkvinnan”: ‘om här hade funnits stora, feta åkrar i stället för denna ufuktbara mossen, då hade de [barnen] inte behövt resa’.⁴⁰

The shortage of arable land was felt even more strongly in Norway, where the population boom experienced throughout Europe in the 19th Century preceded industrialisation, and where cultivatable land was scarce to begin with, with only 3-4% of the land area used as farmland. The hostility of the Norwegian soil towards its farmers created a love-hate relationship between man and earth. Whereas the conquistadors of the 16th Century had an uncontrollable craving for gold, Scandinavian immigrants appear to have had an insatiable appetite for land. Owning vast tracts of land features prominently in the literature and the America Letters as the materialisation of the American Dream.

Major Incentives for Emigration

Despite the scarceness of arable land, in 1801 only approximately 10% of the Norwegian population lived in towns. Of the 90% living in rural areas, two groups of people constituted the majority of those who chose to emigrate. The *bønder*, or independent land holders, and the *husmenn*, or crofters. The *bønder* formed a kind of rural aristocracy, although most of them were anything but wealthy. When economic structures began changing in the mid-19th Century, many were unable to maintain their farms. The *odel* system – designed to secure lineal continuity of ownership of cultivated land – barred younger sons from gaining access to family farms, and many among them preferred to emigrate in order to become independent farmers themselves. As ironic as this may seem, the historical evidence suggests that the emigration of Norwegian farmers was an anti-modern reaction. Although America was pictured as a fresh, new place, where modern technology and political systems create a better world, the temptation to go there was often characterised by a desire to *preserve* an endangered way of life. By preferring emigration to urbanisation, the Norwegian farmer rejected the most obvious features of the modern era. An interesting element in the decision to emigrate was linked not to the present, but to the future. Many heads of families, who were themselves in a stable economic situation, wished to emigrate for the sake of their children, believing that America offered better opportunities, especially concerning the purchase of cheap and fertile land. They predicted, rather accurately, that the majority of Norwegian farmers would eventually have to abandon agriculture.

As for *husmenn*, together with farm labourers and servants, none of whom owned land or property, America clearly offered a better future in material terms. Some of them would, thanks to the Homestead Act (see p. 24 below), fulfil the dream of land ownership, while others viewed the New World as an opportunity to earn enough money to improve their social status on their return home. Of those who entered the statistics as emigrants, many did not plan to leave for good. However, they did not return because wealth remained as illusive in America as it had been in Norway. Unintentionally and often reluctantly they became 'Americans'.

In the 19th Century proletarianisation and ultimately urbanisation was also the inevitable fate of Swedes from rural areas. Internal migration developed into a mass movement, and had a far more dramatic impact on Swedish economy, and society in general, than emigration. However, in districts such as Småland, Blekinge and Skåne,⁴¹ where an emigration tradition was established in the early stages, it was seen as an acceptable alternative to internal migration. As in Norway, the opportunity to continue an agrarian lifestyle was often the incentive. Emigration propaganda was often aimed at those among the Swedish lower-classes who seemed to lack a strong sense of class solidarity or a willingness to participate in a class struggle. Skårdal substantiates this claim with her observation that 'Scandinavian workers in this [Scandinavian-American] fiction usually [...] turned a deaf ear to the arguments of labor organizers and strike leaders. [...] Nowhere except in the scattered work of a few labor poets did the sense of membership in a proletariat appear.'⁴² Many of those who resented proletarianisation were originally farmers, or children of farmers, who grew up into a social position that was inferior to the one they were born into. Instead of joining the emerging proletarian movement in Sweden, they preferred to re-establish a kind of farming aristocracy in America. However, it must be remembered that resisting proletarianisation was an expression of fear of economic hardship. It is impossible to say whether rural emigrants, be it freeholders, crofters or seasonal workers, would have been as hostile towards proletarianisation had it guaranteed an improvement in their living standards. In other words, one must be careful in

attaching romantic significance to the anti-proletarian and anti-modern stand taken by many, and interpret it as purely ideological.

As emigration during its peak years affected first and foremost the lower-classes, it is surprising that the phenomenon does not figure more prominently among proletarian writers and other social-realists.⁴³ One explanation for this apparent lack of interest in emigration as a literary theme before Moberg, who writes at a time when emigration is no longer a social debate but a historical fact, would be that the emigrants were associated with the opponents of the class struggle. Were they intentionally ignored because they were viewed as class traitors? Could the fact that they were not the poorest of the poor have caused proletarian writers to feel less sympathetic towards them? The historical evidence does suggest that emigration was an option favoured by those who lacked a feeling of solidarity towards any unit larger than the family (*i.e.* social class or nation-state). But the historical evidence also suggests that once emigrants became immigrants their loyalty to the homeland knew no bounds.

As mentioned earlier, the Jansonites are possibly the only example of emigration caused directly by religious persecution. In other cases it is difficult to determine the role intolerance towards lay-movements played in the collective or the individual's decision to emigrate. The Swedish Conventicle Act was repealed in 1858, and emigration during the peak period therefore cannot be linked to any form of *official* religious intolerance. Persecution is thus only a minor push-factor, and only in the early phases. However, religious idealism was a significant pull-factor, mainly through the activities of the revivalist movements in America. The Baptists and the Mormons sent missionaries to Scandinavia in the 1850s and 60s, where they promoted an image of America as a haven for those who seek freedom of worship, and a paradise for those who *actively* wish to promote the arrival of the Millennium.

Personal problems of a romantic or familial nature, as well as restlessness and adventurousness, or the wish to avoid military service, were all common push factors on the individual level. However, these are outweighed by social factors, expressed

as frustration at the rigid class structure and lack of prospects in the Old World. The various push factors are incomplete without a set of pull factors that turn emigration from idea to reality. In America, it was said, a person's social background played no role in his or her ability to succeed. When emigration took the form of political protest, the negative image of social and religious intolerance in the Scandinavian monarchies was reflected positively in American institutions and values, such as those stated in the 1776 Declaration of Independence: 'We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.'⁴⁴ Article III of the Bill of Rights was similarly appealing: 'Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.'⁴⁵ From the 1890s onwards, social and political dissatisfaction may no longer be regarded as push factors, and many immigrants also became critical of the ruthlessness of the capitalist system in America, *i.e.* they no longer viewed its social structures as ideal. Emigration gradually became a purely economic phenomenon.

The two major material pull factors were the availability of cheap and fertile land, and the American demand for skilled and unskilled labour, which was rewarded by relatively good wages. During the early and peak stages of emigration (up to 1890) it was the dream of land ownership that often tipped the balance in favour of emigration. Two pieces of legislation made this dream possible. The first was the 1841 Pre-emption Law that allowed for the selling of government land at a cheap and stable price. The second, and more significant one was the 1862 Homestead Act, with its promise of 160 acres of free land to American citizens or immigrants who declared their intention to become naturalised. Those who worked the land for five years were entitled to full ownership. The purpose of the Homestead Act was to attract settlers to the lands west of the Mississippi, and it is there one finds the greatest concentration of Scandinavian immigrants and their descendants, even today.

One relatively minor pull-factor is linked to the early image of America as Eldorado, and contributed more to the fantastic folklore surrounding America than to actual emigration figures. This was the 1848 California Gold Rush and the Alaska Gold Fever that followed several decades later. Unlike agricultural pioneering which suited the Scandinavian spirit, and was therefore on the whole successful, the literature presents prospecting for gold as a symbol of the deceitful side of the American dream.⁴⁶

6. REACTIONS TO EMIGRATION

While a minority in the radical press, particularly in Sweden, encouraged emigration because it viewed it as a powerful protest against appalling socio-economic conditions, the official attitude to emigration was highly critical.⁴⁷ Throughout most of the 19th Century national-romantic ideas dominated political and social thinking, and emigration was seen as an unpatriotic act. In his essay "Romanen om utvandrarromanen" (1957) Moberg writes: 'för de styrande, de bildade klasserna, akademikerna och alla som hade något att säga till om i landet, blev attityden till emigranterna helt avståndstagande: De var otacksamma och illojala människor, som övergivit landet som hade fött dem. Dessa landsmän borde en gång för alla glömmas: De var landsförrädare.'⁴⁸

America, theoretically the political opposite of Europe, was vilified by the clergy and the authorities who presented it as a place of lawlessness and moral corruption. Emigration could have been, as in Denmark for instance, silently accepted as a solution to social problems,⁴⁹ but it seems that the Norwegian and Swedish authorities feared the repercussions of a closer contact with America, which could lead to a popular demand to introduce social reforms, and even republicanism, as a reward for the cessation of emigration. In other words, the conservative authorities were not too concerned with emigration itself (especially not in its earlier small-scale phase) but with the American influence on Scandinavia, bound to increase as the number of Norwegians and Swedes in America grew.

While the America Letters generally painted a rosy picture, the authorities attempted to blacken it and used every fragment of worrying or unpleasant news, or the occasional gloomy letter, to spread fear and disillusionment. In Moberg's *Utvandrarna* Kristina is horrified when she reads a newspaper story about an immigrant woman and her three children who were devoured by crocodiles. But her brother-in-law Robert is sceptical: 'Stycket i tidningen var säkert bara lögn; någon hertig eller greve hade väl satt in det för att avskräcka simpelt folk från att utvandra.'⁵⁰ Among the civil and religious authorities there were also those who issued warnings in a more realistic tone. The hard work required for survival, the difficulty and cost of transportation, and communication problems caused by ignorance of the language were all meant to dissuade people from emigrating. When it emerged that all warnings were ignored, the emigrants were presented as insane – dangerously sick with a fever, which they had no strength to resist. More imaginative clergymen emphasised in their anti-emigration sermons the dangers of the New World by using biblical imagery, as the Norwegian-American journalist Knud Langeland confirmed in 1884: 'When we farmers went to America, the clergy prophesied that we were going to Hell'.⁵¹ America was said to be crawling with strange beasts, reminiscent of apocalyptic descriptions, as well as serpents – the image of the devil in paradise. Typical of the scare-mongering was the emphasis on disease and death, preferably under hideous circumstances which could never occur in the homeland. But the emigrants too turned to the Bible for justification of their actions. The influential Norwegian letter writer Gjert G. Hovland wrote from Illinois to a friend on July 6, 1838: 'I and others who have been accustomed to work since we were children think of this as a Canaan when we consider the fertile soil, which without the use of fertilizer brings forth fruits of every kind. Norway can no more be compared with America than a desolate waste with a garden in full blossom.'⁵² It thus seems that the language used in the battle to halt emigration often backfired, although this can only be proved with certainty regarding the many who did, in fact, emigrate. Whatever the dangers, it seemed the emigrants were confident that their decision to leave was both practically and morally justified.

7. IN AMERICA

General Patterns

From the 1850s onwards, in parallel with direct emigration from Europe, the transcontinental movement westwards of European immigrants and Americans pushing the Frontier away from the Eastern colonies, began to gather momentum. The pattern of settlement was determined by the possibilities opening up in the West, and whereas the first generations of immigrants would sometimes choose a landscape which reminded them of 'home', later generations were forced to settle where land was available. The romantic image of immigrants choosing a place for settlement because of its resemblance to their homeland, widespread in literature and popular myth (see Chapters Three and Four), is therefore not entirely inaccurate,⁵³ although there is historical evidence to suggest that occasionally this indeed was the case.

The westward movement took place step by step. After stopping for guidance or recuperation in one of the established settlements along the route, the pioneers moved further west to start another settlement, which would in turn become a new 'mother colony' on the route of those pushing the Frontier even further west. Some families would send one of their members in advance to inspect the land and its possibilities, others would settle close to relatives and friends. Very often three or four families would establish a small farming community on the Frontier, as described by O.E. Rølvaag in *I de dage* (see Chapter Three). Having chosen the spot where they wished to settle, immigrants spent the first few months clearing the land and felling timber for log cabins. In treeless areas settlers spent the first few years in sod huts. Initially their lifestyle was communal to varying degrees, but gradually each family became independent. As mentioned, shared property was rarely the ideal of Scandinavian immigrants.

During the cold season with nothing to do on their own land, many heads of family would find work with railroad and lumber companies. They were also the ones to travel and sell their crops in towns, and in this way they learnt English and acquired better knowledge of their new country. Women, however, were isolated and rarely had the chance to learn English. Nostalgia for the homeland soon developed, as did,

in many cases, a strong sense of loneliness and disillusionment. As authors such as Rølvaag and Moberg observed, the process of acclimatisation was harder for women. The extreme heat of the Midwest summer and the surprisingly cold winters added to the traumatic experience of adjustment. Different customs, strange foods and a new language all made the transition painful. In *The Nature of the Place. A Study of Great Plains Fiction* (1995),⁵⁴ Diane Dufva Quantic notes that 'the fiction abounds with portraits of women worn out by the land'.⁵⁵ On the other hand, America had a reputation for being a good place for women, both in terms of treatment and of wages, and many single young women found work as domestics and enjoyed a better standard of living and greater freedom than they had in the Old World. All these general trends, featured in the America Letters and recorded by historians, have been used by authors in the portrayal of individual immigrants.

Until the 1890s immigrants had a tendency to settle in the Homestead Triangle. Minnesota Territory was particularly popular among Swedes and Norwegians. Since pioneers colonised previously unsettled areas, they had the privilege of naming 'unnamed' places. Native American names were often ignored, either because they were too difficult to pronounce, or because they did not seem to convey the ideals of the white settlers. A few thousand Scandinavian place-names are to be found in the Midwest, usually recycled names of towns and regions in the old country, or names of prominent settlers. Typical of European immigration to America in the pioneer-era is the tendency not to assimilate in existing communities, but to create new places whose names reflect an attachment to the homeland. The Midwest was to be the 'New Scandinavia'⁵⁶ – a bigger and wealthier version of the original.

Americanisation or Ethnic Segregation?

Although most immigrants landed in New York, the majority headed to Chicago, the gateway to the West, almost immediately. Many Swedes and Norwegians settled in the city because they had no means to travel further. On arrival in Chicago, some were plundered by the so-called 'agents', mostly fellow countrymen with better knowledge of the new country, occasionally by other nationalities who learnt the immigrants' language. Many experienced poverty such as they have never known in

their homeland. Out of such tragedies, various Scandinavian relief associations were formed, reflecting the sad realisation that the price of American freedom was the loss of human solidarity. The establishment of inward-looking, ethnically-based organisations, whether charities or schools, also mirrored the ethnocentric nature of immigration to a place that lacked the infrastructure of a 'complete' nation; the structures created served the needs of the different ethnic or national communities rather than the needs of society as a whole.

It seems that Swedish and Norwegian immigrants, like other members of relatively small ethnic groups, were particularly prone to resist assimilation. Skårdal notes that 'concern with one's own family and group, at most including only those of the same national background, remained typical of Scandinavian immigrant authors throughout the literature.'⁵⁷ Another view, again according to Skårdal, is that ordinary immigrants accepted Americanisation as a necessity, but that their spiritual and cultural leaders, as well as those writing fiction in the Scandinavian languages, advocated the preservation of traditional culture,⁵⁸ thus creating the impression that the majority of immigrants viewed Americanisation with contempt or apprehension. Scandinavian-American newspapers, the most important of which were *Nordlyset* (started in Muskego, Wisconsin in 1847); *Skandinavia* (New York, 1847); and slightly later – *Emigranten* (Wisconsin), *Decorah-posten* (Iowa) and *Skandinaven* (Chicago), played a crucial role in the preservation of a separate cultural identity. The Scandinavians' tendency to settle near fellow countrymen also assisted in maintaining their cultural heritage for a longer period, and fresh waves of immigration gave impetus to this effort: 'Svearna skola bli svear även i den nya världen', declared Fredrika Bremer.⁵⁹ Particularly in rural areas, the confusing meeting with New World values necessitated a return to Old World ways, as Oscar Handlin writes in *The Uprooted* (1951): 'Their view of the American world led these immigrants to conservatism, and to the acceptance of tradition and authority.'⁶⁰

In this conservative atmosphere, the desire to maintain a separate national/ethnic identity was made even stronger by the coupling of one's Christian faith with one's national identity (Swedish or Norwegian). The formation of a Lutheran congregation

in a settlement often marks a return to institutionalised religious practices. Traditions were not necessarily forgotten upon emigration, but they were either neglected for practical reasons, or not attributed the cultural and spiritual significance they later acquired. The development of the Norwegian Lutheran Church in America is a clear example. In the early days of emigration, those leaving displayed clear low-church tendencies and the Haugean element was especially strong. Over the years, however, Norwegian immigration becomes characterised by a gradual shift from pietistic lay-movements⁶¹ towards orthodox Lutheranism and High-Church practices. Incidentally, this coincides with the shift from group to individual emigration. Individuals, obviously feeling the loss of a collective identity more acutely than members of like-minded groups, expressed their fear of cultural disintegration by seeking to create religious continuity. They transferred the structures and rituals of the Norwegian Lutheran Church to the American soil because, as Aksel Sandemose writes in *Det svundne er en drøm* (1946), 'kirken er et fast punkt i den alminnelige hjemløsheten.'⁶² The longing for orthodox Lutheranism was stronger than the attractions offered by the various American churches such as the Methodist, Baptist, or Mormon.

In many cases immigrants, and not least their spiritual leaders, treated America and its culture (or lack of it) with so much suspicion that the more open-minded among them had to warn against the 'Europeanisation' of America – a process in which a geographically defined continent (unity) is split into separate ethnic entities, each emphasising its uniqueness (disunity). This was most noticeable in religious matters, with the mother tongue becoming synonymous with "the language of the heart".⁶³ Since God's word could only be understood in that language,⁶⁴ Norwegian and Swedish were used in religious teaching and preaching. Not just Lutheran Swedish and Norwegian churches, but also Scandinavian-American Methodist and Baptist congregations, despite being an Anglo-Saxon phenomenon, retained Swedish or Norwegian as the language of worship long after the turn of the century. During the First World War, when suspicion towards non-American cultures and organisations increased, and due to the fact that the numbers of Swedish or Norwegian speakers

were declining, many churches were forced to switch to English, in a gradual process that signaled the final phase of a reluctant assimilation.

The confusing experience of material success against a background of psychological anguish creates an ambiguous relationship with the land. The immigrants' attitude to culture and assimilation suggests that America was viewed as an empty vessel. Accordingly, and tragically, the minds of the land's original inhabitants were also viewed as vacant, 'a beautiful blank, on which anything may be written'.⁶⁵ The Frontier had to be conquered and cultivated because it was so *rich*, and yet empty of meaning. It had to be filled with the culture of the Old World – its songs and dances, its legends and folk-tales, its food, clothing, and most importantly its secular and religious ceremony. In order to feel at home, the complete cultural set-up of the Old Country had to be reproduced, as Bremer notes after visiting a Swedish colony in Wisconsin: 'Jag kände mig [...] lycklig att se dem här så hyggliga och så *svenska* ännu mitt i främmande land.'⁶⁶

The immigrants' religious, social and political conservatism is a reflection of the paradox inherent in the economic emigration of god-fearing people. Their daily reality demands material improvement, but the value system they hang on to condemns the preoccupation with worldly things. Thus the spiritual structures created by immigrants in a relatively secure material environment tends to favour, in theory if not in practice, a mild form of asceticism, as if to make up for the ease with which one earns one's daily bread. However, in many ways this asceticism reflects the reality of the first hard years as immigrants, and is therefore a commemoration of the initial experience of America and not necessarily a celebration of the poverty in the homeland.

Food is an interesting example of the way in which a substance totally devoid of religious meaning acquires spiritual significance in a place that is perceived as spiritually empty, or existing only in material terms. Initially, abundance of food in America was a major pull-factor, and already at this stage one sees how earthly needs are translated into religious concepts, perhaps as a way of justifying one's decision to

emigrate. American abundance is never, in the eyes of immigrants, associated with gluttony but rather with the 'land of milk and honey'. After an initial phase during which the immigrants revel in all that is new, including the quantity and the quality of the food, they begin to establish themselves culturally, having achieved a basic material security. It is at this stage that their old culinary traditions gain a certain spirituality that helps define their cultural identity. Any meal, whether it consists of *rømmegrøt*, *spekekjøtt* or simple *flatbrød* with cheese, is no longer a mundane and physically necessary act, but a ritual in which the homeland is being celebrated. Material culture, social ritual, religious ceremony and language all form the script upon which the immigrants' re-enactment of their previous life is based. In this way, remnants of the cyclical time, if not the vertical space, are being preserved.

The Tragedy of Immigration

The immigration experience is often perceived as tragic, as the following and rather typical quote from *The Uprooted* demonstrates: 'Loneliness, separation from the community of the village, and despair at the insignificance of their own human abilities, these were the elements that, in America, colored the peasants' view of their world.'⁶⁷ Immigration results in a mental split and a cultural gap that cannot be filled, no matter how prosperous the immigrants appear to be. The loss of their cultural heritage creates a wound that even apparent Americanisation and assimilation cannot heal. The sentimental longing for anything linked with the homeland, often so strong that remigration is contemplated and attempted, is an expression of this impossible situation. Language is a central theme in historical and literary accounts of the difficulties of acclimatisation. Rølvaag, himself an example of an outwardly successful immigrant, believed that the way to become a good American was to preserve one's cultural legacy.⁶⁸ Nevertheless he viewed immigration, whether characterised by assimilation or ethnic isolation, as a disastrous experience for the individual, whose mental situation was almost impossible, largely because of language difficulties. In 1929 he wrote:

'The giving up of one language and the acquiring of a new required a spiritual readjustment which forever will be beyond the power of the average man, because it required a re-making of soul. He cannot give up the old because that would

mean death to him, and he cannot master the new – the process is simply beyond his power.’⁶⁹

Yet from the point of view of the collective a more positive picture emerges. Although many immigrants never fully mastered English, most of them were not linguistically frustrated or helpless. As far as the first generation was concerned, no real loss of language was experienced, since, as mentioned, the pattern of settlement for most Scandinavians ensured that immigrants lived in ethnic enclaves, allowing them to conduct their daily lives in their mother tongue. Furthermore, Norwegians in particular had a tendency to settle near other Norwegians from the same region, thereby securing the subsistence of their particular dialect for a while longer. As for the second generation, most learnt English in school, whether attending American common schools or taught by Scandinavian teachers, and had greater contact with native speakers of English. The result was that they became bilingual rather than ‘non-lingual’ (*i.e.* without a language they can express themselves in). This could, however, have contributed to the generation gap because it highlighted the fact that children were better skilled than their parents. In several emigrant novels the issue of language is used both concretely and symbolically to indicate a break between parents and children. Moberg and Rølvaag both raise the problem, and seem to suggest that the shift in language implies a change of mentality, even personality. (See pp. 140-43 below)

On the other hand, the development of the unique Norwegian-American English meant that immigrants and their children shared a common language, and that they were successful in creating a linguistic situation in which they felt comfortable, and which was more or less acceptable to their host country, because it expressed a willingness to absorb the language of the new place. Norwegian-American evolved naturally from the encounter with new agricultural, technical, political and economic terms for which there was no Norwegian equivalent. Significantly, though, certain realms of this language were, well into this century, hardly influenced by American reality, mainly those concerned with abstract notions, the church – both its structure and the spiritual terms associated with it – and the realm of domestic life.⁷⁰ This new language did not reflect a conscious decision to integrate while staying apart. Nor

was it a written language, but simply an instrument for convenient oral communication. In the broader cultural context it became the language of an emerging entity that is the Norwegian-American – a New World phenomenon built with Old World parts.

While history's broad picture is that of achievement and triumph, it appears that literature, whose vehicle is language and its focus the individual, tends to emphasise, and occasionally exaggerate, the traumatic aspect of language shift and hence the immigration experience in general.

8. EMIGRATION FROM SCANDINAVIA TO OTHER PARTS OF THE WORLD

Latin America

Statistically, the number of Scandinavian immigrants in Latin America is insignificant both in comparison to numbers of Scandinavians in North America and to the numbers of other European immigrants in Latin America. Yet South America appealed to small numbers of individuals and groups, who did not necessarily share the same general characteristics of the average North America immigrant. Attracted by its exoticism and fascinated by the independence movements active in South America at the beginning of the 19th Century, those who emigrated to areas south of the Rio Grande were often, as Hans Norman and Harald Runblom describe them in *Transatlantic connections: Nordic Migration to the New World after 1800* (1988), 'adventurers, sailors, businessmen, explorers, and some social outcasts.'⁷¹ Although somewhat unreliable, available figures show that between 1850 and 1940 half of the Scandinavian immigrants to Latin America were Danes (approximately 17,000), a third Swedes (approximately 10,000) and the minority (between 3,000 to 5,000) Norwegians. The peak years of Scandinavian immigration to Latin America were around 1890, with Brazil and Argentina as the main receiving countries.

A boom in coffee cultivation in Brazil during the 1880s and 1890s led to increased emigration from Europe. At the same time, slavery in Brazil was finally abolished, and with the expansion of cultivated areas the demand for free labour made Brazil an

alternative to North America. The Brazilian government actively recruited European emigrants through agent activity and by opening offices in Europe. From about 1870 Argentina too became attractive for immigrants, especially as a result of the expanding meat and cereal trade. Unlike the Brazilian propaganda, and the settlement patterns that emerged in the United States, the Argentinean government did not encourage settlement based on ethnic separation.

There were several group migrations from Scandinavia to South America. The first left Trondheim in 1850 on board the *Sophie*, bound for California to find gold. The group arrived in Rio de Janeiro, but their vessel was in no condition to continue. Its members accepted an offer to start an agricultural colony, but it soon disintegrated and its members left for various other destinations. A similar episode occurred in 1871 when a Swedish group on its way to Australia found itself in Rio de Janeiro. Most other groups left with the intention of establishing colonies. From Sweden there were three important group emigrations, the first in the years 1868-1869, when people mainly from the Stockholm area emigrated to Brazil as a result of an economic crisis in Sweden. Johan Damm, a Swedish publicist who also worked as an emigration agent, was the driving force behind this move. The second such migration, again mainly to Brazil, occurred in 1890-1891 and involved the emigration of 5000 people from the Sundsvall area and some 700 from the Stockholm area. This event is linked to the general peak in emigration during the early 1890s. It was a direct result of the work of Brazilian agents, who concentrated their activities in specific towns. The Sundsvall emigrants were mainly sawmill workers whose frustration with their employers, and Swedish society in general, was utilised by agents and transformed into a belief in freedom and opportunities in Brazil. The third wave came in 1909-1911 as a result of the Great Strike of 1909, during which industrial regions, like the mining town of Kiruna, were hard-hit. Local newspapers advertised the different shipping companies and emigration agencies. Because Brazil was presented as a more affordable option, the nature of this emigration was different from the general trend. While those bound for North America were mainly young, single people, South America was a more realistic option for families with children.

The Brazilian authorities assigned the Swedish immigrants areas for settlement, but these were often distant and disappointing. Many found themselves living in harsh conditions and suffering hunger and disease, gradually coming to the realisation that they had been deceived by propaganda. The 1890-91 and the 1909-11 groups expressed their disappointment by crossing the border into Argentina, where the old Jesuit province of Misiones became a settlement with a strong Swedish component. Due to their isolation it appears that the Swedes retained their language longer than their fellow countrymen in the United States. The Swedish congregation established in Oberá, like other Scandinavian congregations in the New World, displayed conservative tendencies and promoted a cultural identity with its roots firmly in the homeland, despite the fact that its members were bitter towards it when they left.⁷²

Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific Islands

A total of just under 50,000 Scandinavians settled in Australia from its discovery until the first part of the 20th Century, among them a high proportion of Danes. The first were sailors who deserted their ships to join the gold diggers in the mines discovered in the 1850s and 60s. By 1891 there were 10,000 Scandinavians in New South Wales and Victoria⁷³ and another estimated 6,000 in Queensland and other areas. No exclusively Scandinavian settlements were established in Australia, and immigrants assimilated faster than in the United States, presumably because they were more scattered.⁷⁴

A small trickle of Scandinavians, mainly seamen, totalling approximately 500, arrived in New Zealand during the 1860s.⁷⁵ In the 1870s organised emigration on a larger scale began thanks to the efforts of immigration agencies in the three Scandinavian countries, and several settlements were established during the 1870s.⁷⁶ By the mid 1870s there was a total of 4,600 Scandinavians in New Zealand – approximately 50% of them Danish, 25% Norwegian and 25% Swedish.⁷⁷ A few thousand more followed over the next two decades.

In 1880 more than 600 Norwegians sailed to Hawaii to work in the sugar plantations. The venture was organised by Christian L'Orange, himself a plantation owner from Norway, with the support of the Hawaiian authorities who wished to strengthen the European element among the islands' population. The immigrants signed a three-year contract in return for free passage to Hawaii. For those who wished to emigrate to the United States but were unable to pay for a ticket, this was a golden opportunity.⁷⁸ Although the intention was to recruit agricultural workers, many of the emigrants were craftsmen and industrial workers. This factor played a significant role in the problems that arose almost immediately upon arrival in Hawaii. Unaccustomed to agricultural labour many immigrants felt deceived, some felt they were being treated like slaves.⁷⁹ Their resentment led to strikes and legal actions against their employers, which strained relationships between the Norwegian and Hawaiian authorities. With the intervention of the Norwegian diplomat Johan Anton Wolff Grip tensions were eased, and those who stayed on the islands after their contracts were terminated assimilated into local society.⁸⁰

Scandinavians in Africa

Historically Africa does not form part of the New World. Nonetheless colonial and imperialistic activities on that continent are not dissimilar to those that took place in the Americas and the Pacific.⁸¹ Scandinavian interest in Africa focused on trading and missionary activities as well as exploration and the gathering of data by natural scientists, especially in the first half of the 19th Century. With the discovery of diamonds in 1867 and gold two decades later, a limited number of Danes, Norwegians and Swedes chose to emigrate to South Africa, and by the turn of the century their numbers there exceeded 3,000.⁸² As in Australia they assimilated quickly into the English-speaking (and to a lesser degree, the Afrikaner-speaking) communities.

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As this chapter has shown, any discussion on 19th Century emigration from Scandinavia will deal primarily with North America. The following chapters will demonstrate that this is also reflected in the literature. There are, however, examples of literary descriptions of emigration to other parts of the world, although their

numbers mirror the relatively minor historical significance of these migrations. The analysis of literary texts will examine the possibility that although *objective* geographical and political reasons dictated a different immigration experience at different destinations, literary descriptions of emigration are dominated by a *subjective* evaluation of the destination and consequently of the success or failure of the emigration in question.

¹ Kristian Hvidt, *Flight to America. The Social Background of 300,000 Danish Emigrants*. New York and London: Academic Press, 1975, 2.

² Lars Ljungmark, *Swedish Exodus*. Translated by Kermit B. Westerberg. Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1980, ix-x. (Original published in 1965)

³ Theodore Blegen, *Norwegian Migration to America*. Vol. I: 1825-1860. Northfield, Minnesota: The Norwegian-American Historical Association, 1931, 343.

⁴ Currently the term economic emigration is used to denote emigration that is not the result of political persecution.

⁵ *The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*, Vol. II, p. 1385.

⁶ Yi-Fu Tuan, *Topophilia. A Study of Environmental Perception, Attitudes and Values*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1990 (1974), 149.

⁷ Gillian Tindall, *Countries of the Mind: The Meaning of Places to Writers*. Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1991, 58.

⁸ Tuan, 247.

⁹ In Gairdner B. Moment & Otto F. Kraushaar (editors), *Utopias: The American Experience*. Metuchen, N.J., & London: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1980, 16.

¹⁰ Ann-Sofie Kålvemark, "Swedish Emigration Policy in an International Perspective, 1840-1925", in Harald Runblom and Hans Norman (editors.), *From Sweden to America*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1976, 94-96.

¹¹ Until the 18th Century, the settlement of the interior continent – the Mississippi Valley and westwards – was not viewed by the British as an aim in itself, and was desirable only in so far as it would serve as a defense against the French, or be a result of the fur trade. Henry Nash Smith, *Virgin Land. The American West as Symbol and Myth*. New York: Vintage Books, (1950), 5.

¹² *Ibid.*, 6.

¹³ Leonard Lutwack, *The Role of Place in Literature*. New York: Syracuse University Press, 1984, 144.

¹⁴ Clive Bush, *The Dream of Reason. American Consciousness and Cultural Achievement from Independence to the Civil War*. London: Edward Arnold Ltd., 1977, 191.

¹⁵ Jørund Mannsåker, *Emigrasjon og diktning: Utvandringa til Nord-Amerika i norsk skjønnlitteratur*. Oslo: Det norske samlaget, 1971, 16.

¹⁶ Lutwack, 142.

¹⁷ Diane Dufva Quantic, *The Nature of the Place. A Study of Great Plains Fiction*. Lincoln and London: Bison Books, University of Nebraska Press, 1997 (1995), 60.

¹⁸ Henry David Thoreau, *Walden*. Edited with an Introduction and Notes by Stephen Fender. The World's Classics, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997 (1854), 77.

¹⁹ Nash Smith, 55.

²⁰ The Swedish colony was taken over by the Dutch in 1655. Sten Carlsson: "Chronology and Composition of Swedish Emigration to America", in Runblom and Norman, *From Sweden to America*, 114.

²¹ Mannsåker, 17.

²² Blegen, *Norwegian Migration to America*. Vol. I, 11, and to some extent Alfred Hauge in *Hundevakt*, see p. 209 below.

²³ The two important figures in this period are the Uppsala graduate Gustav Unonius who emigrated to Wisconsin in 1841 and disillusioned returned to Sweden in 1858, and the master-builder Peter Cassel

from Östergötland, who in 1845, together with twenty-five immigrants established yet another "New Sweden", this time in Iowa. Carlsson, 115-16.

²⁴ James M. Rubenstein, *An Introduction to Human Geography*. New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1996, 110, and J.H. Paterson, *North America – A Regional Geography*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1965, 49.

²⁵ Dorothy Burton Skårdal, *The Divided Heart. Scandinavian Immigrant Experience through Literary Sources*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1974, 60.

²⁶ Carlsson refutes the claim that no economic considerations were involved, and points out that although many of the early emigrants were not in serious material need, they hoped to profit from selling their lands in Sweden and investing in the expanding Midwest. Carlsson, 119.

²⁷ Ljungmark, 18-21; Mark Holloway, *Heavens on Earth – Utopian Communities in America 1680-1880*. London: Turnstile Press, 1951, 164-168.

²⁸ Fredrika Bremer, *Hemmen i den nya världen*. Vol. I. Stockholm: Tidens Förlag, 1961 (1853-54), 74.

²⁹ Rubenstein, 110.

³⁰ Stephen Castles & Mark J. Miller, *The Age of Migration. International Population Movements in the Modern World*. New York: The Guilford Press, 1993, 48.

³¹ Rubenstein, 110.

³² Ingeborg, R. Kongslien, *Draumen om fridom og jord. Ein studie i skandinaviske emigrantromanar*. Oslo: Det norske samlaget, 1989, 48. Figures vary slightly according to interpretation of available statistics in various sources.

³³ Theodore C. Blegen, *Norwegian Migration to America, Vol. II.: The American Transition*. Northfield, Minnesota: The Norwegian-American Historical Association, 1940, 5.

³⁴ Carlsson, 142.

³⁵ Ljungmark, 90-91.

³⁶ Lars Wendelius, *Bilden av Amerika i svensk prosafiktion 1890-1914*. Skrifter utgivna av Litteraturvetenskapliga institutionen vid Uppsala universitet, no.16. Uppsala: University of Uppsala, 1982, 7.

³⁷ According to official statistics, the total remigration figure for Swedes between 1875 and 1930 is 18.2%. 1930 marks the end of the mass emigration period; from the same year, remigration surpasses emigration. Lars-Göran Tedebrand, "Remigration from America to Sweden", in Runblom and Norman, *From Sweden to America*, 201, 212. A similar trend characterises Norwegian emigration and remigration, with remigration increasing from the 1880s onwards. According to the Norwegian Bureau of Statistics, about a quarter of the emigrants who left after 1880 eventually returned to Norway. Ingrid Semmingsen, *Norway to America. A History of the Migration*. Translated by Einar Haugen. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994 (1978), (The original title, *Drøm og dåd*, was published in 1975), 120.

³⁸ Blegen, *Norwegian Migration to America*. Vol. I, 1.

³⁹ Selma Lagerlöf, "Sagan om Småland" in *Nils Holgerssons underbara resa genom Sverige*. Första bandet, Stockholm: Albert Bonniers Förlag, 1923 (1906), 192. Vilhelm Moberg also links landscape to personality, although his interpretation of the collective traits of the region's petty farmers is a secular one and therefore different in its conclusion: 'De flesta var snåla och näriga; från begynnelsen hade de snålat av nödvändighet, tvingade av den steniga jorden, missväxter och herreförtryck, och när de sedan förkovrade sig, så blev närigheten en vana och nästan invuxen med karaktären.' *Soldat med brutet gevär*. Stockholm: P.A. Norstedt & Söners Förlag, 1972 (1944), 250.

⁴⁰ Lagerlöf, *Nils Holgersson*, 225.

⁴¹ Ljungmark, 48.

⁴² Skårdal, 200.

⁴³ Although none of Sweden's eminent authors wrote about Swedes in America prior to Moberg, in an essay titled "Där ute: Moberg's Predecessors", Alan Swanson mentions several writers who dealt with emigration before the 1940s, and concludes that emigration was not as neglected a theme as it first appears. In Nils Hasselmo (ed.), *Perspectives on Swedish Immigration*. Chicago, Illinois: The Swedish Pioneer Historical Society. In Association with the University of Minnesota, Duluth, 1978, 279-290. A couple of the novels mentioned by Swanson will be discussed in Chapter Three.

⁴⁴ Source: Website of the Historical Text Archive.

⁴⁵ The first ten amendments to the Constitution, known as the Bill of Rights, came into effect in 1791. Source: Website of the Historical Text Archive.

⁴⁶ See pp. 180, 192-94 below.

⁴⁷ Ljungmark, 45.

⁴⁸ In Vilhelm Moberg, *Berättelser ur min levnad*. Stockholm: Albert Bonniers Förlag, 1968, 296. This essay first appeared in a slightly different version in SLT nr. 3 in 1957.

⁴⁹ As early as 1864 'troublesome' people – drunkards, paupers, criminals – were being shipped from Denmark to America. On the whole, the Danish authorities seem to have looked favourably upon emigration as a means of ridding society of its poorest and least productive members, as well as those with a criminal inclination. Hvidt, 20-21.

⁵⁰ Vilhelm Moberg, *Utvandrarna*. Stockholm: Albert Bonniers Förlag, 1995 (1949), 166.

⁵¹ In a letter to John A. Johnson on 30 January, quoted by Orm Øverland in *The Western Home. A Literary History of Norwegian America*. Oslo: The Norwegian American Historical Society, 1996, 74.

⁵² This letter was published in *Den Bergenske Merkur* on November 30, 1838. Quoted by Blegen, in *Norwegian Migration to America*. Vol. I, 197.

⁵³ Ljungmark, 6.

⁵⁴ The Great Plains stretch from Canada in the north to Mexico in the south, and include the Middle Western states of Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Nebraska, Oklahoma and the Dakotas.

⁵⁵ Quantic, 9.

⁵⁶ "Ett nytt Skandinavien" is the famous term coined by Fredrika Bremer in one of her letters published in *Hemmen i den nya världen*. Vol. II. Stockholm: Tidens Förlag, 1961 (1853-4), 191. It is repeatedly used by chroniclers and scholars of emigration.

⁵⁷ Skårdal, 68-69.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 87.

⁵⁹ After visiting the Swedish settlers of Pine Lake (Wisconsin). Bremer, *Hemmen i den nya världen*, Vol. II, 191.

⁶⁰ Oscar Handlin, *The Uprooted. The Epic Story of the Great Migrations that Made the American People*. Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1951, 109-110.

⁶¹ As the Conventicle Act was repealed in 1842 it can be claimed that from that year onwards religious intolerance could not have played any role whatsoever as a push factor.

⁶² Aksel Sandemose, *Det svundne er en drøm*. Oslo: Den norske Bokklubben, Aschehoug & Co., 1983 (1946), 160.

⁶³ Semmingsen, 93.

⁶⁴ Hans Norman & Harald Runblom, *Transatlantic Connections. Nordic Migration to the New World after 1800*. Oslo: Norwegian University Press, 1988, 197.

⁶⁵ George Catlin, *Letters and Notes on the Manners, Customs, and Condition of the North American Indians* (1841), quoted by Bush, 276.

⁶⁶ Bremer, Vol. II, 188.

⁶⁷ Handlin, 108.

⁶⁸ Einar Haugen: "O.E. Rølvaag: The Man and His Work". In: Gerald Thorson (ed.), *Ole Rølvaag: Artist and Cultural Leader*. Northfield, Minnesota: St. Olaf College Press, 1975, 18.

⁶⁹ Letter to Professor Percy Boynton, quoted by Kristoffer F. Paulson, "Rølvaag as Prophet: The Tragedy of Americanization". In: *Ole Rølvaag: Artist and Cultural Leader*, 59.

⁷⁰ Semmingsen, 87-89.

⁷¹ Norman & Runblom, *Transatlantic connections*, 175.

⁷² *Ibid.* 176-180.

⁷³ J. Lyng, *The Scandinavians in Australia, New Zealand and the Western Pacific*. Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1939, 27.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 129.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 158.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 160.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 167.

⁷⁸ Ingeborg Kongslien, "Problems in Paradise. Norwegians in Hawaii in the 1880s". In: *The Norseman*, Vol. 39, Nr. 4-5/1999, Oslo: Nordmanns-Forbundet, 45.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 46.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 49.

⁸¹ For a thorough examination of Scandinavian links with the south of the continent see Alan H. Winquist, *Scandinavians and South Africa. Their impact on the cultural, social and economic development of pre-1902 South Africa*. Cape Town: A.A. Balkema, 1978.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 3-4.

CHAPTER TWO: LONGED-FOR PLACES

1. MAN AND EARTH

In the previous chapter the psychological, social and practical aspects of emigration were discussed. In this chapter a model will be suggested for understanding the imagery accompanying the phenomenon. Special emphasis will be placed on biblical imagery in an attempt to understand general European trends in the rhetoric of emigration. This will be followed by a discussion on specific Scandinavian circumstances and their impact on the language used to describe emigration. As in Chapter One, points will be illustrated with specific examples as well as references to general trends. A detailed analysis of literary texts, based on the questions and hypotheses raised here, will be presented in the following chapters.

Adam – Adama

The phonetic resemblance between *Adam* and *Adama*, the Hebrew words for man and earth, reflect a time when the two concepts were perceived as identical, or closely related. The religious philosopher Martin Buber describes the biblical understanding of the relationship between man and earth as one of mutual dependence. That man is created of earth or clay is a notion widespread in popular myths from the Far East, the South Sea Islands and the African Continent, but according to Buber, the Bible is unique in formulating so clearly the idea that mankind and earth share the same fate, that their existence is totally and indissolubly linked together.¹ In this partnership, man is the dynamic, active element, while earth is passive. The monotheistic worldview is, of course, that both earth and man are God's creations, and it is He who bestows the one upon the other. In the Bible, this religious idea is transformed into what Buber calls a 'theopolitical' concept that explains the special relationship between a particular people and a particular land, both elected by God.² Canaan, the Promised Land, is the specific location of much of the biblical narrative, and a central motif in New World imagery. However, before focusing on the relationship between man and (a specific) land, more should be said on the general subject of man and earth.

In their state of paradisiacal bliss Adam and Eve enjoyed what their descendants came to regard as perfection, but they wanted more. For their disobedience they were expelled from the Garden, and it was no longer accessible to any human. An acrimonious relationship between man and earth replaced the carefree abundance of Eden: 'cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life' (*Genesis* 3:17).³ The fact that the earth is punished for man's sins is further proof that in the eyes of God the two are partners. Earth is man's passive accomplice, although there are descriptions of earth acting autonomously from man in an attempt to balance his baseness, for example when 'the land itself vomiteth out her inhabitants' after they have defiled it. (*Leviticus* 18:25)⁴

The Edenic harmony between man and earth was never restored, for although the curse has been lifted (*Genesis* 8:21) and a sense of kinship with the environment has developed, the dependency on nature, mixed with fear of its capricious temperament, meant that the relationship was, at best, ambiguous. The gravest consequence of eating of the tree of knowledge was that the earth has turned into a confusing double symbol – the paradoxical anchor that is man's true home, and a symbol of confinement. Lutwack writes: 'The ultimate cause of this ambivalence is the knowledge that earth is both the source of life and the condition of death, a place where life begins and ends. Though born of earth, man is reluctant to return to earth, to surrender possibility and accept known limitation.'⁵ In *Vägen ut* (1936), Harry Martinson phrased this ambiguity by referring to the earth as 'växtmarken, blommarken, vandringsmarken [...] gravmarken', and concluding: 'Ingen människa var särdeles långt ifrån jorden.'⁶

In Moberg's *Utvandrarna*, and typical of many novels with an emigration/immigration theme, this ambivalence is presented as a love-hate relationship between man and earth. An unrewarding dependence upon the old land, marked by struggle and hardship, is transformed into a set of conflicting attitudes towards the new. For some it is a generous feminine being waiting to be conquered and cultivated; for others it is an adversary, a force to overcome. The use of feminine

adjectives is not incidental, just as the use of 'man' throughout this chapter is not. For humans, the body is the natural measure of everything, and language and literature make extensive use of comparisons between place and body. The body/earth metaphor is extremely common⁷ and frequently appears in descriptions of the 'feminine' New World – fertile, undulating, even corpulent. Occasionally it is juxtaposed with the masculine Old – lean, rough and bony. Unsurprisingly, the majority of such novels concentrate on a male character, thereby adding another dimension to the erotic imagery. Often the erotic relationship between man and earth is only implicit, but there are examples of direct competition between a female character and the earth her husband desires. In Sven Delblanc's *Kanaans land* (1984), set in the Canadian prairie, Maria is plagued by homesickness, while her husband Fredrik is driven by his infatuation with the newly-conquered land: 'Först i det nya landets famn hade han blivit en ömsint make. Nu kände sig Maria bitter och svartsjuk på Kanada.'⁸

A Divided World

A preoccupation with differentiation and classification is one of Western civilisation's prominent peculiarities. Making distinctions and divisions is our way of understanding the world. Thus, when God created the world He *separated* light from darkness and *divided* the waters to create heaven and earth. The biblical creation is a process of division, not amalgamation. Our view of nature reflects this tendency. Natural features serve to divide places: a river or a mountain chain usually do not join but rather separate two regions. This attitude to landscape is however not restricted to Western thinking. Also in most traditional societies, the sense of division is translated into a distinction between 'our world' and the 'other', between religious and secular space. From the religious perspective, space is not homogenous: 'some parts of space are qualitatively different from others', observes Mircea Eliade in his well-known study, *The Sacred and the Profane* (1959).⁹ Separated from the vast infinity of meaningless terrain the sacred space is revealed and the world – big or small, a temple, a settlement or a whole city – is created. When attempting to find one's bearings in the chaos, the sacred space provides the fixed point, the centre. In Western tradition, the fatal moment of the Expulsion marks the division of human

space in two: the secular and the sacred, the concrete and the longed-for. This spatial splintering implies that man is uncomfortable with his physical surroundings, that he is always longing to be somewhere else.

There are, then, several causes for an ambiguous attitude to the soil. It is a symbol of a split world and of banishment from where man really wants to be. It is also a constant reminder of mortality. Over the centuries man has rebelled against his surroundings that confine him to a limited and divided space. Moving away into urban centres gradually loosened attachment to the soil, and ways of outwardly reducing dependence on the earth were found, but the real change came with the 'discovery' of the New World. It seemed to offer, for the first time since the Fall, the opportunity to experience a vast and complete space, to obliterate the distinction between heaven and earth, between sacred and profane. It is no coincidence that the New World was thought of as a 'world' rather than an unknown part of the Old World. If cursing the earth imposed alienation from nature 'till thou return unto the ground' (*Genesis* 3:19), the New World could perhaps make a *return* to the earth possible; after all, the accounts of its magnificent abundance all suggest that its soil was never included in the original curse, that it resembles the state of the world at the time of its creation. (See Section 2 in Chapter Four on Moberg's use of this theme)

Meaningful Places: The East-West Axis

In order to describe human relationship with the physical environment, Tuan invented the term 'Topophilia'. According to him, this relationship is *not* the most powerful of human emotions. Nonetheless, 'when it is compelling we can be sure that the place or environment has become the carrier of emotionally charged events or perceived as a symbol.'¹⁰ For almost two thousand years, European Christians have been orienting themselves, quite literally, towards 'emotionally charged' places that are not in their own immediate surrounding. Jerusalem, the Holy Land and even Eden are all located east of 'our world'. Although geographically distant and even abstract, these locations were the spiritual centre of the Christian world. As the influence of religion weakened, places like Eden or the Heavenly Jerusalem, previously associated with immortality, lost their comforting qualities, but with the

rise of nationalism and the allegiance it created between man and his homeland, symbolically meaningful places emerged closer to home. In his now widely cited study *Imagined Communities. Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (1983), Benedict Anderson suggests that as a cultural phenomenon nationalism shares its origin with religious thinking. Both are ultimately concerned with making life, and more importantly, death, meaningful.¹¹ If in a secularised world an afterlife was no longer guaranteed, the nation provided the opportunity 'to die for one's country' in return for a form of immortality: commemoration in monuments, memorial services and in the national rhetoric and consciousness.

In literature, as Ian Watt demonstrates in his study *The Rise of the Novel* (1957), a specific setting – and by implication attachment to place – was rarely described before the emergence of the modern genre, the novel. Only when the literature turned its attention from 'types' to individuals did it become necessary to create a specific setting, or as Watt puts it: 'the characters of the novel can only be individualised if they are set in a background of particularised time and place.'¹² Although this would be generalising, one could perhaps suggest that until the emergence of the nation-state and the romantic devotion associated with it, the truly meaningful places in European literature were those that were lost rather than those that were accessible. A nostalgic longing for that which is lost, and the desire to recover it, may indeed be one of the most powerful and persistent driving forces behind human actions, as Harry B. Partin notes in his article on the concept of Paradise.¹³

Nationalism provided one solution to the meaninglessness of place. Similarly, emigration also implies the secularisation of the longed-for place. In both cases the vertical axis is replaced by a horizontal one, but in the case of emigration this also entailed a dramatic shift in orientation, with the West replacing the East as the general location of the longed-for place. Whereas the East was a symbol of the past, the West emerged as a symbol of the future, and was associated with *action*, as opposed to the helpless passivity that characterised attitudes to the Holy Land before and after the Crusades. America in particular emerged as the focus for optimism, because in the eyes of white settlers America was 'empty', it had no history: 'Inga

slott, inga ruiner',¹⁴ declares Bremer. It opened a new chapter in man's relationship with the earth.

2. THE 'GREAT CODE'¹⁵

New World – Old Words

Until fairly recently, the Bible was the central text relating to all aspects of life, and served as the basis for what Northrop Frye calls man's 'mythological conditioning'.¹⁶ When Europeans arrived in the New World they encountered realities for which they had no words. Although the modern era glorified the act of pioneering – in science, in arts, in colonisation – fear of the unknown compelled many to seek similarities between current and previous experiences, real or mythical. Hoping to find a vocabulary to make the New seem a bit more familiar, explorers, immigrants and settlers turned to the Scriptures.

People of the cold, rocky and barren North probably accepted the Bible, with its wealth of images of fertility, as a reliable account of how things are in warmer regions. Although set in a faraway place, in terms of contents the Bible was the most familiar narrative of all. It was therefore both a powerful and a useful source of inspiration for prospective emigrants, who imagined America before they experienced it by projecting familiar descriptions of the longed-for place upon the unknown location. The Bible was the dictionary that Europeans used when they attempted to translate the New World into the Old, and vice versa. It was also the map settlers took with them to the unknown territory.¹⁷ Between its two poles of creation and regeneration, the Bible presents a chain of place-linked events that are unique, but at the same time symbolically similar, as Frye notes: 'the garden of Eden, the Promised Land, Jerusalem and Mount Zion are interchangeable synonyms for the home of the soul, and in Christian imagery they are all identical, in their "spiritual" form [...] with the kingdom of God spoken of by Jesus.'¹⁸ This, however, did not prevent believing Christians from identifying this "spiritual" place with a concrete place, and the fact that many immigrants – individuals and collectives – chose a single image from the Bible and projected it upon America, suggests that the various symbolic representations of 'the home of the soul' each had a slightly different

meaning and purpose in the context of the New World. The approach taken in the following analysis will allow for the possibility that images of America all stand for the same abstract aspiration, while still reflecting different, and occasionally conflicting, visions.

Paradise and the Garden of Eden

The story of Creation is a potentially powerful image in the description of emigration and colonisation, and will be commented upon in a different context later in this chapter. A distinction must however be made between biblical events that are linked to a particular occurrence or period ('time-events', like the Creation and the Flood), and those that are linked to place ('place-events'). When Biblical images were employed to describe America the tendency was to prefer 'place-events', although America was not necessarily perceived in concrete spatial terms. In fact, there is evidence to suggest that for many it was a conceptual rather than a specific location.

We will now set out on a journey between the Garden of Eden and the New Jerusalem, and stop along the route in 'place-events' of particular interest. The obvious starting point for such a journey would be Paradise, but first it is important to distinguish between the generic Paradise and the specific Garden of Eden. Etymologically, the word *paradise* is traced back through Middle English, Old French (*paradis*), Late Latin (*paradisus*), and Greek (*paradeisos*), to its Old Persian origin¹⁹ *pairidaeza*, meaning 'walled enclosure, pleasure park, garden'.²⁰ The word *paradise* can mean anything from a synonym for *Eden*, 'an intermediate place or state where the righteous departed await resurrection and judgement', to *Heaven*, or a more general 'place or state of bliss, felicity, or delight'.²¹ One can therefore say that when 'paradise' is spoken of, a specific biblical image is not necessarily drawn upon. In a well-known Norwegian folktale, *Udrøst*, which can only be seen by pious or clairvoyant people, and is inhabited by the 'underjordiske' (people of the netherworld), is an example of a local vision of paradise: 'her skinner Solen over grønnere Græsgange og rigere Agre end noget andet Sted i Nordlandene, og lykkelig er den, som kommer til eller kan faa se en af disse solbelyste Øer'.²² Like the generic paradise, *Udrøst* is characterised by fertility and abundance as well as beauty.

The Garden of Eden and Paradise share many features, and it is not always possible to distinguish between the two. The Primordial Paradise, like Eden, is characterised by 'perfection, purity, plenitude, freedom, spontaneity, peace, pleasure, beatitude, and immortality.'²³ In paradise there are very few, if any, limitations. Freedom is a central component of the paradisiacal experience, and is extended to include freedom from exertion. Labour is unnecessary – man lives in harmony with nature, and they take care of each other's needs.²⁴ One of the most common representations of paradise is the garden. In the *Genesis* narrative God plants a garden at Eden, placing man to guard it and at the same time nurture himself on it. Man's original habitat was therefore, according to the biblical account, a fertile garden or orchard that supplied all human needs of food and shelter. The emphasis on fertility was possibly in contrast to the surrounding wilderness. In some traditions the Garden of Eden is a concrete place, and the Expulsion is thus a physical experience. As the Bible does not mention the destruction of the Garden, it may be assumed that it still exists and is possible to find. The explorers of the New World, for instance, 'discovered' Eden on the luscious islands of the Caribbean as well as in North and South America.²⁵ The fact that Eden was 'found' in several places in the New World implies that a multiplicity of paradises was possible, and consequently that different kinds of paradises are possible. Since the image of the Garden expresses eternal yearning for the abstract primordial past, it is easy to see how the New World was associated with that past. Not only did it possess the obvious features of abundance and freedom, it also appeared as a contrast to the Old World, the place associated with life after the Fall. It offered, as Kraushaar observers, 'a new moral and spiritual vista with the decadence and depravity of Europe left far behind.'²⁶

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The next climax in the biblical drama is the story of the Flood, whose events constitute the closing chapters of history's first phase. It too can be used as an effective image in emigration narratives: the old corrupt world is wiped out, and a purified world emerges. A crucial element in this destruction and regeneration is the fact that the components of this new world (humans, animals, plants, minerals) are identical with the old one. There is no mention of a new creation, only of

purification, and the chosen few are spared so that they can populate the new. The parallels with the movement to America are obvious: European culture is to be transplanted, in a refined form, in the new soil. Both Moberg and Hauge employ the Ark image, implicitly and directly (see Chapter Four). Nonetheless, the Flood is not a central image in descriptions of America because it is, like the Creation, concerned more with an occurrence than with a place.

The Wilderness

A seemingly contrasting image to that of the Garden is that of the wilderness, a somewhat different 'place-event', but a significant one all the same. For many it is associated with the long years of wandering in the desert on the way to Canaan, but there is much more to this image. Although the Israelites had a natural dislike of the desert and a clear preference for regions of agricultural fertility, the desert (or wilderness) was associated with the ascetic ideal and hence with spirituality. Direct and indirect encounters with God occurred away from settled areas, and the desolate landscape was a symbol of purity, an image of uncorrupted faith. One interpretation of the Hebrew word for desert ('midbar') is that it stems from the root of the verb to speak ('daber'): in the silence of the desert man can hear God speak. In the early Christian period hermits would seek God in the desert, which, lacking in distracting features, appeared to inspire an intimate relationship with the Holy Spirit.²⁷ This ambiguity towards wilderness was imported to America. For the optimists it provided an opportunity to create a pure lifestyle in an unspoilt environment and to enjoy seemingly infinite freedom. For others America was desolate, a place of great danger, as Lutwack notes: 'Always an ambivalent symbol in the history of man everywhere, the wilderness in America early came to represent both the forbidding aspects of the new continent, its perils and hazards standing in the way of survival, as well as the mysterious source of spiritual health and regeneration.'²⁸

In the early colonial period, white settlers experienced wilderness mainly as a threat, but as European nature-romanticism spread among the 'cultured' layers of American society, a gap in environmental perceptions appeared and continued to widen between farmers fighting the wilderness, and refined city people finding pleasure in

its charms.²⁹ Since the majority of Scandinavian immigrants had a rural background, the literature often presents the wilderness as their adversary. Most of them could not appreciate the landscape for its own merit, but rather for its *potential* (see Chapter Four on Moberg's Karl Oskar). For them, the wilderness had no romantic associations. Contributing to that was the fact that in anti-emigration propaganda the wilderness was equated with lawlessness, bringing forth fear and anxiety. There were, however, two positive aspects to it. Firstly, wilderness could be interpreted as 'emptiness'. A new meaning, ironically based on age-old visions, could be poured into it and define it. Secondly, during the pioneer-era the wilderness could serve as what Lutwack calls 'a testing ground in which to build strong moral character'.³⁰ Authors like Moberg, Rølvaag and Bojer show how the liberating force of the wilderness brings out the best in settlers, but only in those who were physically and emotionally strong to begin with. For women in particular, the wilderness was mostly a negative experience (see Chapters Three and Four). For others the wilderness symbolised ruthlessness and moral decline. Although physically subdued by the pioneers, its spirit has taken over them and permeated into the rest of American society, as Knut Hamsun observed in his caustic anti-American treatise of 1889, *The Cultural Life of Modern America*. In it he mocks the way in which what he sarcastically calls the 'uplifting power of freedom' has 'turned idlers from every corner of the earth into steady workers',³¹ by which he indicates that the only remnant of the American wilderness is the savage way in which immigrants and Americans alike struggle to survive.

Canaan: The Promised Land

Moving on chronologically we now enter the Promised Land. The location of aspirations is specific, and associated with political as well as spiritual and material needs. Compared with the universal appeal of the Garden of Eden (being the true 'home' of all mankind), the Promised Land reflects a world in which people define themselves on the basis of tribal or 'national' identity. It is also a far cry from the carefree tranquillity and protection of the Garden, as it must be cultivated and defended. Physically, whereas the Garden represented a womb-like enclosure, the Land is open and therefore exposed.

As mentioned earlier, there are theological and psychological arguments for viewing the Garden of Eden and the Promised Land as spiritually identical. 'Amerikavisan', quoted by Moberg in *Soldat med brutet gevär* (1944), demonstrates that the image of Canaan was often associated with the carefree bliss of the Garden:

"Tänk vad folk som till Amerika far,
ej många snart det finns i landet kvar,
ty på blanka banan
ha de rest till landet Kanaan,
för att njuta sällhet alla dar."³²

However, although in the New Testament the Garden of Eden and the Promised Land ultimately converge to imply the same spiritual sense of contentment, they represent two different ideals. The former is associated with youth and leisure, the latter with productive labour. Wild nature is tamed, and the pastoral landscape, with flocks and herds and cultivated fields, appears.³³ While still longing for the innocence of the Garden of Eden, man is aware that the Fall dictates a different reality, even in an idealised world. Consequently, Canaan might be an image of the regained paradise, 'but only by dint of purifying suffering and moral striving.'³⁴

Central to the concept of the Promised Land is its association not so much with freedom (as in the myth of paradise) but with *liberation*. America has moved from its paradisiacal phase in the early colonial period to its status as the Promised Land during the period of large-scale immigration, which was, as demonstrated in the previous chapter, motivated mostly by socio-economic considerations. The hope of liberation – from poverty, hard work, rigid social structures – was expressed by using the image of Canaan. Although still hopelessly optimistic, viewing America as a Promised Land is in fact a relatively sober interpretation of the New World's potential. Unlike the Garden of Eden, or alternatively the New Jerusalem, Canaan does not promise immortality, not even a prolonged life. On the other hand it emphasises continuity by being given by God to Abraham and his descendants forever. The *Exodus* narrative also solves another specific problem associated with white colonisation. By comparing America to the Promised Land, the settlers justify the extermination or exile of the land's original inhabitants with the biblical

prototype. They are not invaders or intruders, but the rightful owners of the land promised to them, the Chosen People, by God. The term “Manifest Destiny”, coined in 1845 by John L. O’Sullivan, expresses precisely the idea that American expansionist activity is justified and necessary for ‘the fulfilment of our manifest destiny to overspread the continent allotted by Providence’.³⁵ By remaining on the earthly level of biblical ‘place-events’, immigrants focus their attention on the practical and political benefits of America. Thus a parallel emerges between the biblical narrative and the history of the European conquest and colonisation of the New World. Both move from the realm of the ideal to the domain of the real, from the general to the specific.

Another crucial element in the concept of the Promised Land is its material importance. When emigrants talk of a ‘Canaan’ they talk of fertility and abundance. Considering its geographic position, Canaan is indeed a relatively fertile land. But even there, sustenance is not guaranteed. The end of the patriarchal period is in fact marked by famine, and the Israelites go to Egypt (*Genesis* 47:4) on what turns out to be a prolonged exile. Initially, though, Goshen in Egypt replaces Canaan as a symbol of abundance. For many America served the very same purpose as Goshen – immediate escape from hunger – and for many it also became a place of exile. It is therefore surprising that ‘Goshen’ does not feature more frequently in emigration narratives. There are exceptions, of course. Jon Norstog, a Norwegian-American poet, dramatist and novelist, wrote the following poem in 1918:

*“What land is this?” asks Jacob of his sons.
“It’s Goshen,” answers Judah. “Here the land
Has beauty as the land that was my fathers’ s. [sic]
Behold, this is to be your home.” The old
Patriarch looks out upon the land.
“Here you’ll be filled with longing, father!”
Says Benjamin. - “Why should that be, my son?”
“Because there are no memories.” - “There were
No memories before we built our homes
In that land from which we now have come.
Our land is where we make our memories
Or wherever we are led by life.”
“I cannot understand. Please, father, did not
God give us the home we’ve left behind?”*

*"He did, my son, but this, too, is our gift
From God."*³⁶

The specific political, psychological and historical reasons outlined above help explain why the image of the Promised Land is so central in the rhetoric of emigration. All these reasons point towards a more realistic view of the prospects in America. This, however, does not rule out the possibility that the Promised Land, as a concept, was a powerful image that appealed to people's religious sentiment as well as their common sense. The initial and presumably universal linkage between man and earth is limited in Judaism to a special bond between a specific people and a specific land, but broadened by Christianity to symbolise a link between a personal state of grace and a blessed land. Unlike the Garden of Eden which the Bible presents as a fact, the Promised Land in many ways remains on the level of potential rather than reality, or as Buber phrases it: 'This land was at no time in the history of Israel simply the property of the people; it was always at the same time a challenge to make of it what God intended to have made of it.'³⁷ It is a symbol rather than an actuality, and it is as a symbol that it was handed down to generation after generation of Christians, until America again presented the possibility of realising the potential. Thus we have a complex image which is practical on the one hand, and utopian on the other; it is a realistic representation of the immigrants' social and political aspirations, and at the same time an expression of their longing for 'a land flowing with milk and honey' (*Exodus* 3:8), which could be considered a detailed image of the generally bountiful lost paradise. The difference is, of course, that Paradise is a backward-looking symbol while the Promised Land is a symbol that guides one into the future.

On the specific image of milk and honey, Frye notes the curious fact that neither of these symbols is a vegetable product,³⁸ but Buber explains that the two are 'representative products that the land offers to the newcomer without the need for any effort on his part'.³⁹ And yet the first concrete symbol of Canaan was a cluster of grapes supplemented with pomegranates and figs (*Numbers* 13:23), and a more detailed description of a land of great potential – *but which requires human effort to extract* – is given along with the long list of commandments, prior to entering

Canaan: 'A land of wheat, and barley, and vines, and fig trees, and pomegranates; a land of oil olive, and honey; A land wherein thou shalt eat bread without scarceness, thou shalt not lack any *thing* in it; a land whose stones *are* iron, and out of whose hills thou mayest dig brass.' (*Deuteronomy* 8:8-9) Thus it appears that also on the level of specific imagery associated with the Promised Land, emigrants were incorporating into a single metaphor ('Canaan') the 'utopian' symbolism (milk and honey) and the 'concrete' (or realistic) symbolism (grapes, wheat etc.).

The New Jerusalem

The Garden of Eden and the Promised Land are both images of innocence and simplicity, the one passive, the other more active. They reflect the values of the Hebrews who had a dislike for refined urban cultures and whose prophets constantly reproached the cities: Sodom, Gomorrah, Babylon, the Egyptian cities and even the Old Jerusalem. In *Isaiah* (1:21), for instance, the city is likened to a harlot. Urban centres are symbols of obscene abundance, corruption, lust and sinfulness. Also in the New Testament Jesus represents the values of the simple life. Born in rural Bethlehem, he befriended fishermen and shepherds.⁴⁰ On the other hand, many cultures had a more positive attitude towards the city because it symbolised liberation from constant physical toil, and seemed to be less dependent on nature's caprice. In an essay titled "City-Icon in a Poetic Geography: Pushkin's Odessa", Anna Makolkin writes: 'Cities were born in a state of rebellion against Mother Nature and the natural cycles of life.'⁴¹ For the ancient Greeks the city was a symbol of freedom, and as an ideal it was preferable to rural life;⁴² it was in the city that poets and philosophers constituted the perfect community. In Europe in the Middle Ages the city was the place where the bishop had his seat and was thus an image of the City of God.⁴³ As cities evolved into religious centres (Rome, Trier, Avignon and Cologne – to name a few examples), it seemed that the city, as a general concept, shed some of its negative associations.

The growing distance from the old, concrete Jerusalem did much to improve the image of that particular city as well. The historical dust that settled over it and covered its imperfections strengthened the religious and emotional bond with the

city. In Jewish tradition after the Babylonian exile, Zion becomes the object of prayer and longing. Similarly in Christian literature and hymns, although rarely mentioned in the New Testament, Zion features as a designation for the heavenly city, or less frequently the earthly city of the faithful Christian. Because the heavenly Jerusalem is the dominant image in the final chapters of *Revelation*, it can be said that the longed-for place, like mankind itself, has been urbanised. Significantly, although the New Jerusalem is to enjoy the wealth, glory and honour of all the nations (*Rev* 21:26), be architecturally perfect, and in short, possess all the qualities that cities in the past, scorned by biblical scribes, aspired to possess, it is presented not as the antithesis of the Garden of Eden, but as its perfection. The water of life and the tree of life are re-introduced, but this time in a place where the gates are never closed (*Rev* 21:25), implying that humans will never be excluded or banished again because it is a place where evil or sin cannot occur. It must however be stressed that if the Heavenly Jerusalem is the perfection of Eden, it is from the point of view of human civilisation, not divine creation.

If the vision of the future is urban, and the westward movement in modern times was guided by biblical visions, one would expect the city to be a central image in the construction of America. However, although emotionally and spiritually a rehabilitated symbol, the reality was, especially after the Industrial Revolution, that cities again became emblems of decay and corruption. Perhaps even more so than in Europe, the city, in the eyes of many Americans, was, as Tuan observes, a 'Babylon-den of iniquity, atheistic and un-American, impersonal and destructive.'⁴⁴ As noted in the previous chapter, the movement away from Europe to the New World can in many ways be defined as anti-modern. The agrarian ideal, or the anti-urban sentiment, expressed so frequently in the rhetoric of America, clearly mirrors this trend. Thus very few novels about emigration, as the following chapters will demonstrate, present the city as their ideal place.

As mentioned, following the Homestead Act many individuals as well as Millennialist groups moved west, believing they would find their new Zion in the wilderness. Although the images of 'Zion' and 'Jerusalem' were in use, most

religious utopias and individual visions were linked to agrarianism. However, it appears that the city as an ideal was not entirely discarded, only it had the pervasive agrarian myth to contend with. The first Puritan settlers borrowed biblical ideas about the city, and viewed it as a metaphor for the ideal community. Unlike the Garden of Eden's association with *individual* bliss (although a couple, Adam and Eve function as one unit; once Eve acts independently, the harmony of the Garden is lost), the Heavenly Jerusalem is a symbol of communal bliss. In *Writing the City: Eden, Babylon and the New Jerusalem* (1994) Peter Preston and Paul Simpson-Housley comment: 'the frequency with which the city appears as the physical embodiment of the utopian community reminds us of its perceived potential to achieve a kind of contained perfection, always in a desirable and sustaining equipoise and forming a refuge from the chaos that lies outside its walls.'⁴⁵ John Winthrop's 'City upon a Hill',⁴⁶ with its emphasis on human and spiritual purity, was to be a model for the whole world to follow. Yet its values were those of the farmer: unsophisticated, in tune with nature. Like a mini-America, it was more of a concept than an actual place, and there was no intention to adapt the modern, urban model of a city.⁴⁷

Thus the two poles of the Bible represent several visions of longed-for places with many shared features (purity, abundance, no death or pain), but which are physically different. The vision of the past is arboreal and vegetal, the future is built in stone and adorned with minerals.

Prototypes and Reality

So far the various biblical prototypes used to imagine America have been examined separately. Yet it seems to be the case that the images were not consistently applied. The hodgepodge of biblical phraseology might suggest that the single image is of relatively little significance; what is important about America is the fact that it inspired people to think and speak in biblical terms. Without paying too much attention to the details of each 'place-event' in the Bible, they all seemed to represent what Europeans hoped to find in America. One could even claim that the expectations were so high, that no single image was powerful enough to convey

them, or alternatively, that the expectations were so varied, that several images had to be employed.

It is possible to trace the evolving and complex image of America as emerging in parallel to the increasing amount of information (substantiated or not) about the new continent. Based on explorers' accounts, the European interpretation of the lifestyles of the indigenous peoples created a link between a state of blissful innocence and material copiousness, although they seemingly contradict one another. Throughout the history of white America, regardless of the utopian or idealistic elements in the initial incentive for colonisation, whole communities as well as individuals measured their success according to the level of material well-being. What lured many to the New World in the first place was the promise of regaining innocence and freedom, but the particular images of wealth – gold, silver, precious stones – were just as powerful. Significantly, these are also linked to the biblical description of the New Jerusalem.

As noted, once the westward expansion started gaining momentum, the wilderness, the concrete and the symbolic, became a central image of America. Romantic attitudes to the wilderness were characterised by a desire to preserve it in its original state; it was not to be tamed by agriculture or technology. The wilderness inspired the first settlers to see themselves as actors in a new production of the biblical drama. Challenged by harsh conditions and heathen opponents they were to establish a new covenant with God.⁴⁸ However, since America signalled *change*, the obvious conclusion was that the wilderness was there to be transformed. Unlike the Eldorado dream that related only to what can be extracted from the land, the passion to own land turned out to be a more efficient method of conquest, since it could potentially create a bond between man and place. This was based on the rejection of wilderness as a desired environment. The agrarian ideal was in fact a reaction to the wilderness as much as it was a reaction against the city, as Lutwack observes: 'The pastoral in literature is not, as many readers mistakenly assume, a celebration of wild nature. Trees, rocks and wild animals are proper symbols of the wilderness; fruit trees, flowers and domestic animals, of the garden.'⁴⁹

3. THE NORSE CODE

In the context of western civilisation, biblical imagery may be regarded as 'universal' imagery. But in relation to emigration, colonisation and America, Scandinavians had another source of imagery to draw upon, namely their local Norse past, which in the following discussion will be referred to as 'national' imagery, though it must be stressed that the term 'national' refers to the modern application of this imagery, and not necessarily to its original purpose.

In *Imagined Communities*, Anderson points out that one of the characteristics of the nation is its perceived finiteness:

'The nation is imagined as *limited* because even the largest of them, encompassing perhaps a billion living human beings, has finite, if elastic, boundaries, beyond which lie other nations. No nation imagines itself coterminous with mankind. The most messianic nationalists do not dream of a day when all the members of the human race will join their nation in the way that it was possible, in certain epochs, for, say, Christians to dream of a wholly Christian planet.'⁵⁰

Based on his observation, a distinction may be made between religious and national imagery – the former relevant to all mankind, the latter limited to a specific nation – although the two may serve the same 'explanatory' function, and in literature they often complement one another. In the next two subsections a hypothesis about the role of universal and national imagery in the context of modern Scandinavian emigration will be presented, followed by an attempt to substantiate it with historical evidence. The section will conclude by examining the possible implications of the hypothesis on literary accounts of emigration.

Creation and Colonisation

In *The Sacred and the Profane*, Eliade equates the act of inhabiting a place, be it a whole village or a single house, to the act of creation. By separating it from the profane, or meaningless space, man creates a sacred (or meaningful) place in the same way the gods create the world. The same goes for the conquest of a foreign territory: 'By occupying it and, above all, by settling in it, man symbolically transforms it into a cosmos through a ritual repetition of the cosmogony',⁵¹ or in

other words: '*settling in a territory is equivalent to founding a world.*'⁵² (Author's italics) As an illustration, Eliade uses the Norwegian colonisation of Iceland:

'When the Scandinavian colonists took possession of Iceland (*land-náma*) and cleared it, they regarded the enterprise neither as an original undertaking nor as human and profane work. For them, their labor was only repetition of a primordial act, the transformation of chaos into cosmos by the divine act of creation. When they tilled the desert soil, they were in fact repeating the act of the gods who had organized chaos by giving it a structure, forms and norms.'⁵³

Eliade's claim originates from an idea by Anton Gerard van Hamel, elaborated by the Dutch phenomenologist Gerardus van der Leeuw in *L'homme primitif et la religion* (1940).⁵⁴ It appears unsubstantiated, since the text upon which it is based – *Landnámabók* – makes no mention of such a thought process, unless the ritual of throwing one's highseat pillars overboard as a means of determining one's place of settlement⁵⁵ is to be interpreted as the practical expression of a 'repetition of a primordial act'. It is nonetheless an appealing idea, and one could say that its historical accuracy, or lack of it, is insignificant if one considers its potential as a poetic image.

In his introduction to a Norwegian translation of *Landnámabók*, Hermann Pálsson compares the colonisers of Iceland not to their own gods but to the biblical Israelites: 'På et visst fortolkningsplan inviterer *Landnámsboken* til en sammenligning mellom Norge og jødeutvandringens Egypt, mellom Harald hårfagre og Farao, og mellom Island og Det lovede land.'⁵⁶ But he adds: 'Imidlertid er boken mer enn en utvandringshistorie, den er også en innvandringshistorie, en skapelseshistorie.'⁵⁷ Thus it emerges that two prototypes of action, the Creation (or a creation myth) and the Exodus, are central in the rhetoric of colonisation, or indeed in any context that requires justification for activities that involve both great risks and great gains, as Frye notes: 'The stories of creation and exodus in the Pentateuch form part of a context of law – the prescribing of certain forms of action [...] Obedience to law makes one's life a predictable series of repeating conditions: peace, prosperity, freedom.'⁵⁸ They are also central in descriptions of modern emigration and immigration. The experience, and therefore the accounts (literary and otherwise) of discovery, conquest and early colonisation appear to draw upon a creation story;

emigration and immigration (also containing an element of colonisation) upon the Exodus. These images are 'universal', and are available to all Europeans.

Scandinavians, however, as noted, have another, 'national' source of inspiration available to them. In broad lines, push and pull factors in the 9th and the 19th Centuries were similar. In both cases major incentives for emigration were the lack of arable land and the desire to escape social and political pressures at home, against the hope of greater freedom – economic and political – elsewhere. Adventurousness and curiosity functioned as psychological push and pull factors for both ancestors and their descendants. The parallels between events recounted in *Landnámabók* and the colonisation of the American West are quite striking: the uninhabited landscape, the sense of freedom and lawlessness, the glorification of individualism and the imaginative liberty to create and name places.

And yet, is it possible that the *landnám*, although heroic, represents values that were contrary to the values of the overwhelming majority of 19th Century emigrants, who saw themselves as practising Christians, many with a strong pietistic background? If Scandinavians in America were to imitate their ancestors who imitated their gods, this would be in conflict with their own God and own religion. On the other hand, identifying themselves with their ancestors could incorporate them in a tradition that would give them an advantage over others, who did not have the hereditary 'knack' of colonising new territories.

Vinland

The parallels with the Viking expeditions of discovery and colonisation, as described in the *Vinland sagas*, are another possible source of inspiration. These create a ready-made bond with a previously unknown location. If one was to read *Eirik's Saga* as a reliable historical chronicle, one would find support for the Norse claim to be the first discoverers of America. A chance discovery by Bjarni Herjolfsson was followed by temptation to exploit by Leif Eirikson, son of the Norwegian Viking Eirik the Red, founder of the Icelandic colony in Greenland, and representative of the spirit of adventure and bravery that characterises the great explorers. Attempted colonisation

by Thorfinn Karlsefni and his party, the first settlers of Vinland, clearly marks the territory as Norse. Again, 19th Century Scandinavian, and in particular Norwegian immigrants find themselves in a somewhat confusing situation. Their faith imposes upon them a source of inspiration that is geographically distant, while their history provides a prototype that directly concerns them and their particular situation. Those with knowledge of the Norse past might have felt that the joy of reclaiming one's rightful heritage was marred by the somewhat petty details concerning the lives of Eirik the Red and Leif Eirikson, the former banished from Iceland, the latter an emblem of reckless intrepidity. They represent a Viking ideal that is contrary to the Christian value of meekness. Even if one overlooks the problematic religious aspect, *Eirik's saga* does not conceal the fact that the Norse attempt to colonise America was a failure: 'Karlsefni and his men had realized by now that although the land was excellent they could never live there in safety or freedom from fear, because of the native inhabitants. So they made ready to leave the place and return home'.⁵⁹ Although belonging to a technologically superior culture, the Vikings were driven out of America by its indigenous people ('Skrællinger'). This is hardly a mythological or a historical account that could provide encouragement for the emigrants, and it has in fact been suggested that neither Leif Eirikson nor Thorfinn Karlsefni were motivated enough to put up a struggle because they had their safe and prosperous farms to return to.⁶⁰ In other words, the *Vinland Sagas* correspond to modern emigration narratives only in terms of the general westward orientation. Their ideological and psychological contents put them in a different category.

Furthermore, although the Vikings were colonisers just as much as they were traders, they are generally associated with swift and effective *movement* as opposed to permanent settlement. Consequently, any imagery associated with the Vikings is not particularly compatible with descriptions of the Promised Land, with its emphasis on perpetuity and stability. The Promised Land is also an image of exclusivity: intended only for a chosen people, it runs counter to the Viking tendency to assimilate in an already existing culture. There are of course many instances of Norse settlements retaining their unique cultural identity, Iceland being the obvious example. This does not change the fact that Norse colonisation ventures appear to be somewhat

haphazard when compared to the *Exodus* account, in which the destination and its future are fixed.

Awareness of the Norse Past

An appropriate source of imagery or not, a crucial question is whether the immigrants and their contemporaries had access to it. In an essay titled “Romantikk, tradisjon og nasjonalkultur”, the Norwegian folklore historian Olav Bø suggests that in Norway some form of national identity, preserved by the *bønder*, had survived the Kalmar Union, Danish rule and the Reformation. By implication, some vague knowledge of the ‘Storhetstid’ (Golden Age) could have survived over the centuries, although there is little evidence of continuity in the oral transmission of mythical and heroic tales from the Viking period to the 19th Century. The Norse cultural heritage was at any rate resorted to when the need for a common past arose. As part of the nation-building project during the national-romantic era, the country’s politicians and cultural leaders turned to history for inspiration: ‘Det galdt om å gjere historia kjend for alle gjennom nye omsetjingar, det galdt å tolke historia slik at folket fekk tiltru til framtida.’⁶¹ In Sweden, the likelihood of the existence of such a historical awareness is slimmer. If not earlier, then by the 17th Century the Norse heritage had become the property of the learned classes. The lower-classes had no access to their ancestral pool of imagery, although national-romanticism influenced and re-shaped the nation’s views of its own past, and the upper classes’ control of the education system meant that notions about the Norse past could have filtered down to the lower-classes. In theory, this would have contributed to the creation of a collective awareness regarding the existence of potential national prototypes, as opposed to universal ones.

What is clear is that for the few among the learned classes who advocated emigration or even emigrated themselves, the appeal of the Norse legacy was irresistible. Ole Rynning, a curate’s son and a student at the University of Christiania, emigrated in 1837, and his book *Sandfærdig Beretning om Amerika, til Oplysning og Nytte for Bonde og Menigmand* was published in Norway in 1838. Orm Øverland, professor of American literature at the University of Bergen has commented on Rynning’s book

that '[it] was modest in size but was to have a greater impact on early immigration than any other publication.'⁶² Its contents dealt mainly with the practical aspects of immigration, but of significance to this discussion is Rynning's claim that: 'Af de gamle Sagaer sees tydeligt, at de Norske alt kjendte Amerika før den sorte Død. De kaldte Landet Viinland Gode [...] Efter den sorte Død, 1350, glemte de Norske Veien til Viinland Gode, og Æren for Amerikas Opdagelse tilskrives nu Christopher Columbus'.⁶³

In 1875, American-born Rasmus B. Anderson introduced the term *Vesterheimen* in an article in the Chicago newspaper *Skandinaven*. In the original Old Norse the term meant 'the Western World', but in America it was to signify 'our Western Home'. Anderson recommended that Norwegian Americans adopt this Icelandic word for America, and with time it came to denote not the whole of America but Norwegian America.⁶⁴ These two examples are by no means proof that the majority of immigrants were aware of the Norse past or that its imagery appealed to them. However, they do demonstrate that the immigrants' leaders were keen to encourage awareness of the Norse heritage in general and of the Scandinavian ancestral link to the New World in particular in order to facilitate the transition and generate a sense of national pride in what the authorities at home considered an unpatriotic act (see pp. 25-26 above).

Universal and National Imagery in Literature

Although it is impossible to prove that 19th Century emigrants were aware of the Norse past, it is quite clear that authors are both aware of it and keen to make use of it in their descriptions of emigration. The effect of presenting Scandinavian immigrants 'returning' to the New World rather than 'discovering' it like other Europeans, and the association of colonial expansion not with the modern era but with the heroic past is indeed powerful. Authors and historians could of course claim that when it comes to an awareness of Norse achievements, one does not need a scholarly knowledge of medieval texts (such as the *Landnámabók*) in order to understand the essence of the matter. What this understanding consisted of is entirely immaterial. In fact, the more distorted the source, the more heroic events appear to

be. Thus a vague notion of the Norwegian colonisation of Iceland or of the discovery of Greenland and North America is in many ways more effective than knowledge of the 'facts'. Some authors, like Kåre Holt and Johan Bojer, would have us believe that a link with their Norse ancestors existed in the 'collective consciousness' of the emigrants (see Chapter Three). On the other hand, writers like Moberg and Hauge are aware that biblical imagery was the natural choice for the historical (as opposed to fictional) emigrants, that their 'mythological conditioning' was Bible-based. This imagery was therefore used to describe their (*i.e.* the emigrants') thoughts and feelings. The authors themselves, however, might be tempted to draw parallels between the immigrants and their Viking ancestors, since, as will be discussed in Chapter Three, a novel about emigration is often concerned with national rather than with universal values. Thus a gap sometimes appears between the author's view and the view of his or her characters. This is not to say that authors were not themselves attracted to the symbolism of the biblical narrative. Moberg for example acknowledges the centrality of the *Exodus* narrative not just as a spiritual inspiration for the emigrants, but also as a literary prototype (see Chapter Four).

By finding or creating parallels between biblical, medieval and modern events authors can produce three-layered emigration narratives of epic proportions. Rølvaag's *I de dage* (1924) can serve as an example. The book is dedicated 'Til dem av mitt folk som var med i det store landnám, dem og deres ætter', and the opening section of the book is also called 'LANDNÁM', a metaphor for Norwegian pioneering on the Dakota prairie. At the bottom of the same page⁶⁵ Rølvaag added an epigraph that gave the book its title: 'Kjemper var på jorden i de dage, --- de veldige, de fra fordums tid'. This ambiguous verse from *Genesis* 6:4,⁶⁶ which precedes the account of the Flood, shows that although Rølvaag could move comfortably between the two sources of imagery, he also sensed the clash between the universal language of Christianity and the unique heritage of the Norsemen. It is significant that he did not choose a more obvious or optimistic verse about the Promised Land. Religion was central to the Norwegian identity, but Rølvaag, known for his rejection of the cultural melting pot, is not interested in its universality but rather in its unique Norwegian-Lutheran manifestations. Hence his references to Norwegian folktales

and Norse history. At the same time he is aware of the images that make up the world of his characters, and specific Norwegian folktale imagery features side by side with biblical references, for instance in the titles of chapters, especially, and significantly, in the three volumes that followed *I de dage: Riket grunnlegges* (1925), *Peder Seier* (1928) and *Den signede dag* (1931). As mentioned in Chapter One, immigration frequently resulted in a return to more orthodox Lutheranism and a more conservative view of tradition. Rølvaag's novels are a literary reflection of this process.⁶⁷

4. THE NEW WORLD AND THE OLD

Disillusionment

For those who wished to find their pastoral Canaan in America disappointment was in store. Its sheer dimensions made the effort seem pointless, as Willa Cather writes in *O Pioneers!* (1913): 'the great fact was the land itself, which seemed to overwhelm the little beginnings of human society that struggled in its sombre wastes. [...] men were too weak to make any mark here, [...] the land wanted to be let alone, to preserve its own fierce strength, its peculiar, savage kind of beauty, its uninterrupted mournfulness.'⁶⁸ In order to subdue the overpowering land, non-romantic and non-democratic means were resorted to. The Southern states turned to slavery, the West to mechanisation and large-scale business management ('agribusiness') – all very far from the ideal of a simple life of self-sufficiency. Due to economic pressures, farmers were hardly ever stationary. They moved according to trend, from the East towards the West, in search of better farmland. A real bond between man and earth could not be established.

It would be easy to write off the American Dream as totally misleading, to 'deconstruct' the vision and expose its fraudulence. And yet, although none of the preconceptions about America were realistic, none was entirely false. The dream fed generation after generation of prospective emigrants and then fuelled the westward movement. 'A pioneer should have imagination, should be able to enjoy the idea of things more than the things themselves', writes Cather,⁶⁹ and for a long time America has indeed succeeded in remaining in the sphere of ideas. Even for immigrants and

settlers who were confronted with its reality, America – ‘the things themselves’ – continued to be somewhat illusive. The land was so vast that disappointment could always be pushed eastwards, while hope pulled westwards. But after 1890, when Homestead land was no longer available and the Frontier was declared closed,⁷⁰ the disillusionment that followed necessitated a re-evaluation of the concepts and the images that made up the obsession, the fever known as ‘America Fever’.

It is possible that the process of disillusionment started immediately upon arrival, that the meeting with the spectacularly different scenery of the New World has ironically strengthened the environmental preconceptions of many explorers and settlers. As Tuan notes: ‘Confrontation with novelty served to magnify a people’s cultural bias: migrants saw the new environment through eyes that had adapted to other values.’⁷¹ In the past, natural features such as mountains were considered to be beyond man’s control, and humans tended to react emotionally by attributing sublime (or divine) qualities to them, or, in other cases, considering them as evil, the abode of demons. Gradually, though, the awe-inspiring qualities of many natural features have been eroded. In the modern era the emotional interpretation has weakened, but the aesthetic element in attitudes towards natural phenomena is still strong.⁷² Following that argument one could claim that the attachment fictional Norwegian and Swedish immigrants develop towards their homeland is *aesthetic*. The homesickness they experience stems from a longing for aesthetically gratifying and familiar landscapes. While the literature, as we shall see, seizes on this psychological explanation, it often translates it into a longing for the abstract national landscape and atmosphere, as the short story “En villstyring” by the Norwegian Einar Berg demonstrates. Having left his home to escape a strict, pietistic environment, Ole Sætre finds himself alone on the Canada prairie. Leafing through the Bible his mother put in his trunk he senses that ‘der inne i boken lå hele Norge konsentrert og kompakt: Tindrende sol over blåner og fjell. Davidssalmer og linn sus av vår. Dunkle forutsigelser om tusenårsriket blandet sammen med vemodig fløit av nattergal. Glade toner om soning og seier, fuglelåt i solmettet skog, blomstrende kløvereng, fjellbekker som hastet mot havet.’⁷³ Incidentally, this is an example of the use of religious imagery in conjunction with a specific national landscape, which appeals to

the national sentiment at least as much, if not more than it does to the universal religious sentiment.

In many cases disenchantment was ironically highlighted by material success. Hoping to find America spiritually uplifting many immigrants found it 'blank' instead. In *Det svundne er en drøm*, Sandemose writes: 'Amerika har bare spøkelser, ingen sjel. De forente statene er et kaldt land med døde veier og døde hus, døde byer. Et land med bare en gryende sjel. Norge er et levende land.'⁷⁴ A crucial element in man's relationship with the environment – time, a sense of history – is lacking in the New World, as Delblanc observes through his protagonist, Maria, in *Kanaans land*:

'Hon sökte efter de tecken på odling och gammal kultur hon vant sig vid i sitt hemland, hon spejade förskrämd efter Väses välskötta, rödmålade boningshus, mossiga milstenar och gärdesgårdar av uppröjd sten, hon saknade Hedeby's medeltida kyrkor och vita, drömmande slott bak lummiga lindalléer. Omålade ruckel var allt hon såg, skräpiga och tillfälliga boplatser, nomadläger med tält av trä. Hon väntade sig var morgon, att grannarna skulle ha brutit upp under natten för att dra vidare på sin rastlösa vandring mot väster, mot nya land att besegra och plundra. [...] Det var landet utan historia, ungdomligt, vilt och rått.'⁷⁵

In a land where space replaces time life appears entirely *horizontal*, flat. A broadening of the horizons cannot compensate for the loss of the vertical dimension. The vertical – a dialogue with the earth below and the heavens above – has to be reconstructed or created. As the literature shows, this can only be partially achieved by second and third generation descendants of immigrants, who develop a sense of history relating to their own immediate surroundings.

In recent decades it has emerged that disillusionment was two-way: also the land was let down by man. The Europeanisation and colonisation of America meant destruction rather than renaissance, it

'resulted in the collapse of indigenous Indian ecologies and the incorporation of a European ecological complex of animals, plants, pathogens, and people. It was legitimated by a set of symbols that placed cultured Europeans above wild nature, other animals, and "beastlike savages". It substituted a visual for an oral consciousness and an image of nature as female and subservient to a transcendent male God for an animistic fabric of symbolic exchanges between people and nature.'⁷⁶

The female body/earth metaphor, so enticing from a European point of view, was proven to be a weapon of mass-destruction. Also from the viewpoint of the land's native inhabitants, Europeanisation spelled disaster: 'To the Indians it seemed that these Europeans hated everything in nature – the living forests and their birds and beasts, the grassy glades, the water, the soil, and the air itself.'⁷⁷ The Promised Land became 'The Punished Land'⁷⁸ – victimised by those who had the highest expectations of it. Although one assumes that a reflection of this tragic realisation will be present in novels written from the 1960s onwards, there seems to be little concern with the environmental impact of immigration.⁷⁹ One may therefore ask, whether Scandinavian literature about emigration/immigration is not in fact more concerned with the homeland than with the receiving country.

The West-East Axis

Some tackled disillusionment with the same 'tools' and the same vocabulary used for creating the illusion, as Robert Scholes observes: 'The story of America is the story of a second fall, in some ways more terrible than the first. This fall began in hope, a hope terrifying in its greatness, its power, and bearing within it the seeds of its own doom.'⁸⁰ The longed-for place ceased to exist, and with it the dream of reconciliation between man and earth. For many others, disenchantment opened up a channel of communication with what was previously taken for granted, ignored or even abhorred: the Old World, its landscapes, its values, its traditions. America is the place where one lives, but not necessarily the place where one wants to be. Very quickly the homeland becomes the immigrants' 'lost paradise', the place they spend their energies to regain, if not physically then mentally.

Returning to Eliade's definition of the fixed point that is the sacred place, one sees how the East's role as the fixed point of Christianity was challenged by those who emigrated to the New World. They did not reject the concept of a fixed point, but they changed its location by moving it westwards. In the 19th Century, only a handful of Americans and Europeans, among them the various missionaries in Asia, Africa and the Middle East, the founders of the German⁸¹ and American Colonies in Palestine, including the Swedish farmers from Nås (see Chapter Four), remained true

to the original Christian orientation, and travelled eastwards in order to experience the unity of faith and place. They were 'fundamentalists', whose spiritual goal corresponded to their geographical destination. The real drama of the modern era, though, belongs not to the fundamentalists but to the 'revivalists' who turned their backs on the Ancient World in its capacity as the 'centre of the world', and crowned The New World as the new centre. However, the expectations associated with re-locating a sacred place and fast-forwarding the Millennium to the here and now were far too unrealistic to be fulfilled. While the westward movement was an ambivalent forward but backward-looking motion, searching for the perfect image of spirituality as well as physical well-being in both the past and the future (The Garden of Eden/Paradise, The Promised Land, The Heavenly Jerusalem), by the end of the Pioneer period, spirituality is most definitely associated with the past, but not the distant one. It is synonymous with the Old Country. Thus the immigrants' orientation is turned eastwards again, but not towards the same East. For them the homeland becomes the fixed point, the longed-for place. The East-West Axis becomes a West-East Axis, but its eastern pole is now pointing north, to Europe.

¹ Martin Buber, *On Zion. The History of an Idea*. Translated by Nahum N. Glatzer. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark Ltd., 1985 (First published in Hebrew 1944, first appeared in English in 1952), 10-11.

² Ibid., xviii.

³ All Bible quotes are taken from the King James Version.

⁴ See also the following examples: After Cain kills Abel, the murderer is disclosed when the victim's blood cries from the earth (*Genesis* 4:10); Job is also aware of the fact that if he sinned, the earth would divulge his wrongdoing: 'If my land cry against me, or that the furrows likewise thereof complain.' (*Job* 31:38)

⁵ Leonard Lutwack, *The Role of Place in Literature*. New York: Syracuse University Press, 1984, 5.

⁶ Harry Martinson, *Vägen ut*. Stockholm: Bonniers, 1974 (1936), 152.

⁷ Lutwack, 77.

⁸ Sven Delblanc, *Kanaans land*. Stockholm: Bonniers, 1984, 34.

⁹ Mircea Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane. The Nature of Religion*. Translated by Willard R. Trask. New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1959 (original published in 1957), 20.

¹⁰ Yi-Fu Tuan, *Topophilia. A Study of Environmental Perception, Attitudes and Values*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1990 (1974), 93.

¹¹ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities. Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. Revised Edition, London: Verso, 1991 (1983), 10.

¹² Ian Watt, *The Rise of the Novel. Studies in Defoe, Richardson and Fielding*. London: The Hogarth Press, 1992 (1957), 21.

¹³ Harry B. Partin, s.v. "Paradise". In: *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, Vol. 11. New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 186.

¹⁴ Fredrika Bremer, *Hemmen i den nya världen*, Vol. I. Stockholm: Tidens Förlag, 1961 (1853-4), 42.

¹⁵ 'The Old and New Testaments are the Great Code of Art' (William Blake). This quote was used by Northrop Frye in the title of his book, *The Great Code. The Bible and Literature*.

¹⁶ Northrop Frye, *The Great Code. The Bible and Literature*. Toronto: Academic Press Canada, 1982 (1981), xviii.

- ¹⁷ The history of cartography provides a good illustration of the human tendency to project on the unknown not reality, but symbolic or awe-inspiring notions, as the Jungian analyst Marie-Louise Von Franz writes on medieval maps: 'These maps demonstrate *ad oculos* that *wherever known reality stops, where we touch the unknown, there we project an archetypal image*.' (author's italics) Marie-Louise Von Franz, *Patterns of Creativity Mirrored in Creation Myths*. Dallas, Texas: Spring Publications, Inc., 1983 (1972), 5. In the more specific context of inland America, Quantic notes that 'even before the region was explored by Europeans, mapmakers filled in blank space with fantastic myths: a water passage to the West, cities of gold, dangerous adventures.' Diane Dufva Quantic, *The Nature of the Place. A Study of Great Plains Fiction*. Lincoln and London: Bison Books, University of Nebraska Press, 1997 (1995), 5.
- ¹⁸ Frye, 171.
- ¹⁹ WWWebster Dictionary.
- ²⁰ Partin, 184.
- ²¹ WWWebster Dictionary.
- ²² "Skarvene fra Udrøst", in P. Chr. Asbjørnsen og Jørgen Moe, *Norske folke- og huldreeventyr, i utvalg etter originaltekster 1852 og 1870*. Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1983 (1964), 214.
- ²³ Partin, 185.
- ²⁴ Ibid.
- ²⁵ Ibid. 185, 187.
- ²⁶ Otto F. Kraushaar in the Introduction to Gairdner B. Moment & Otto F. Kraushaar (editors), *Utopias: The American Experience*. Metuchen, N.J. & London: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1980, 4.
- ²⁷ Tuan, 51-52.
- ²⁸ Lutwack, 166.
- ²⁹ Tuan, 63.
- ³⁰ Lutwack, 166.
- ³¹ Knut Hamsun, *The Cultural Life of Modern America*. Edited and translated by Barbara Gordon Morgridge, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1969, 6. (The original title, *Fra det moderne Amerikas Aandsliv*, was published in 1889).
- ³² Vilhelm Moberg, *Soldat med brutet gevär*. Stockholm: P.A. Norstedt & Söners Förlag, 1972 (1944), 34.
- ³³ Frye, 72.
- ³⁴ Kraushaar, "America: Symbol of a Fresh Start" in *Utopias: The American Experience*, 12.
- ³⁵ From the *United States Magazine and Democratic Review* (July-August 1845), in which O'Sullivan defends the annexation of Texas, Oregon and California. The term Manifest Destiny has been used by politicians in debates concerning American territorial expansion to the Pacific and beyond, to justify American involvement in Alaska, Hawaii and the Philippines. *The New Encyclopædia Britannica*, 15th edition, s.v. 'Manifest Destiny'.
- ³⁶ Translated by Orm Øverland and quoted in his book *The Western Home. A Literary History of Norwegian America*. Oslo: The Norwegian American Historical Association, 1996. (no page number). See also p. 208 below on Hauge's use of the image.
- ³⁷ Buber, xix.
- ³⁸ Frye, 143.
- ³⁹ Buber, 6.
- ⁴⁰ Kraushaar, "America: Symbol of a Fresh Start", 21.
- ⁴¹ In Peter Preston and Paul Simpson-Housley (eds.), *Writing the City: Eden, Babylon and the New Jerusalem*. London: Routledge, 1994, 101.
- ⁴² There were exceptions, of course. Aristophanes, for one, preferred the tranquillity of the countryside to the bustle of the city, where the poor were being exploited by politicians. In the *Acharnians*, Dicaeopolis describes sitting alone at the Assembly in the city, where he is 'gazing at the countryside and yearning for peace, loathing the town and longing for my village – my village, which never cried "buy charcoal" or "buy vinegar" or "buy oil"; it knew not "buy", it produced everything itself'. *The Comedies of Aristophanes*, Vol. 1: "Acharnians". Edited with translation and notes by Alan H. Sommerstein. Warminster, England: Aris & Phillips Ltd., 1980, p.43, lines 32-36.
- ⁴³ Tuan, 150.
- ⁴⁴ Ibid., 193.
- ⁴⁵ Preston and Simpson-Housley, 2.

- ⁴⁶ John Winthrop (1588-1649) was a central figure among the Puritan founders of New England. His utopian "Citty upon a Hill" was an exercise in social organisation for which the city was a metaphor. Source: "Winthrop, John", *Britannica Online*.
- ⁴⁷ Tuan, 193-196.
- ⁴⁸ Lutwack, 166.
- ⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 165.
- ⁵⁰ Anderson, 7.
- ⁵¹ Eliade, 31.
- ⁵² *Ibid.*, 47.
- ⁵³ *Ibid.*, 31.
- ⁵⁴ Gerardus van der Leeuw, *L'homme primitif et la religion. Étude anthropologique*. Paris: Alcan, Presses Universitaires de France, 1940, 110.
- ⁵⁵ See: *The Book of Settlements – Landnámabók*. Translated with Introduction and Notes by Hermann Pálsson and Paul Edwards. Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1972, 20, 45. Other examples of consulting the god Thor or using omens for guidance regarding the spot of settlement are found on pp. 27-28, 37-38, 90 and 97.
- ⁵⁶ "Innledning: Et essay om *Landnámsboken*". In: *Landnámsboken. Beretningen om Landnåmet på Island ca. 870-930*. Innledning og noter av Hermann Pálsson, oversatt av Liv Kjorsvik Schei, Oslo: Thorleif Dahls Kulturbibliotek, Aschehoug & Co. i samarbeid med Det Norske Akademi for Sprog og Litteratur, 1997, 16.
- ⁵⁷ *Ibid.*
- ⁵⁸ Frye., 48.
- ⁵⁹ *The Vinland Sagas – The Norse Discovery of America*. Translated with an introduction by Magnus Magnusson and Hermann Pálsson. Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1985 (1965), 100.
- ⁶⁰ Vera Henriksen, *Mot en verdens ytterste grense. Vest for storhavet – Grønland og Vinland*. Oslo: Aschehoug, 1988, 349.
- ⁶¹ In Olav Bø, *Folketradisjon og kulturarv*. Oslo: Det Norske Samlaget, 1988, 99.
- ⁶² Øverland, 25.
- ⁶³ Ole Rynning, *Sandfærdig Beretning om Amerika, til Oplysning og Nytte for Bonde og Menigmand / forfattet af en Norsk, som kom derover i Juni Maaned 1837*. Minneapolis: The Norwegian-American Historical Association, 1926 (First published in Christiania 1838), 34.
- ⁶⁴ Øverland, 5.
- ⁶⁵ All quotes are taken from the 1987 Aschehoug edition, which is based on the layout of earlier editions.
- ⁶⁶ In an article titled "Rølvaag as Myth-maker", Paul Reigstad writes, that although most readers associate the 'giants' with the novel's Per Hansa and other pioneers like him, the biblical giants were somewhat ambiguous characters. They are descendants of human women and the sons of God, and although their greatness is emphasised, they are also associated with the growing wickedness on earth, which God is about to wipe out with the flood. In Rølvaag's account these giants could therefore be natural phenomena, the prairie in particular, about to be subdued by man. Reigstad bases his argument on the fact that Per Hansa perceives the prairie as 'a brooding troll' and his wife, Beret, views it as an evil, bewitching force. In: Gerald Thorson (ed.), *Ole Rølvaag. Artist and Cultural Leader*. Northfield, Minnesota: St. Olaf College Press, 1975, 53-54.
- ⁶⁷ See Chapter Three for a more detailed analysis of Rølvaag's tetralogy.
- ⁶⁸ Willa Cather, *O Pioneers!* Cambridge, Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Company – The Riverside Press, 1950 (1913), 15.
- ⁶⁹ Cather, 48.
- ⁷⁰ Lars Ljungmark, *Swedish Exodus*. Translated by Kermit B. Westerberg. Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1980, 52.
- ⁷¹ Tuan, 66.
- ⁷² *Ibid.*, 70.
- ⁷³ Einar Berg, *Langs landeveien*. Oslo: Lutherstiftelsens Forlag, 1938, 40.
- ⁷⁴ Aksel Sandemose, *Det svundne er en drøm*. Oslo: Den norske Bokklubben, Aschehoug & Co., 1983 (1946).
- ⁷⁵ Delblanc, 15.

⁷⁶ Carolyn Merchant, "Ecological Revolutions". In: *Major Problems in American Environmental History*. Documents and Essays edited by Carolyn Merchant. Lexington, Massachusetts and Toronto: D.C. Heath and Company, 1993, 22-23.

⁷⁷ Dee Brown, *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee. An Indian History of the American West*. London: Vintage, 1991 (1970), 7.

⁷⁸ The term 'The Punsihed Land' is taken from the title of a book by the poet Dennis Silk, published in 1980 by Penguin Books.

⁷⁹ See Chapter Four on Hauge's trilogy for a possible exception.

⁸⁰ Robert Scholes. "The Fictional Heart of the Country: From Rølvaag to Gass". In: *Ole Rølvaag. Artist and Cultural Leader*, 2.

⁸¹ The Templer movement established a total of six colonies in Palestine, with the aim of reviving the spirit of the Apostolic Church in the Holy Land. Ruth Kark & Michal Oren-Nordheim, *Jerusalem and its Environs*. Jerusalem: Academ, 1995, 159-60.

CHAPTER THREE: THE EMIGRANT NOVEL

1. NATIONS, MIGRATIONS AND NOVELS

The model presented in the previous chapter was aimed at providing an overview of the language used in connection with emigration to the New World. In the following, an attempt will be made to find the common denominators that make up the literary form known as the emigrant novel. These, along with the model suggested above, will serve as the basis for the analysis of a selection of texts with an emigration/immigration theme.

Novels and Nations

In a short essay titled "The Galway Plains" (1903), W.B. Yeats describes the stories, legends and poems that form the link between a landscape and its people, and notes: 'There is still in truth upon these great level plains a people, a community bound together by imaginative possessions'.¹ While landscapes, people and even various customs are concrete, a sense of belonging to a collective is largely dependent on more abstract notions. Possibly inspired by Yeats' terminology, in *Imagined Communities* Benedict Anderson has suggested that nations do not passively emerge but are actively 'imagined'.² The traditional interpretation of national consciousness as a product of an 'awakening' has been challenged, and is now replaced by the idea that such a consciousness is the result of creative activity, aimed at instilling an awareness or a memory where previously there was none.³ As a creative product the nation has much in common with the novel genre, and indeed it has been suggested that both share the same historical and political origin, reflecting and serving the needs of the emerging middle-classes. Two distinctive features commonly associated with the middle class also characterise the early novel: the demand for civil liberty and hence a preoccupation with the rights of the individual, or more generally *an interest in the individual*, and, somewhat paradoxically, *an interest in defining a collective* that is larger than, say, the family unit or the village, but smaller than mankind as a species or religion as a unifying spiritual element. The imagined community, or nation, is shaped on the self and the collective is a reflection of that

self. As nations were being imagined and concretised as geographical and linguistic units, early novels mirrored this search for identity by taking their readers on journeys within the newly defined borders of the nation. In an article titled "The national longing for form" (1990), Timothy Brennan takes the argument further and claims that the novel as a genre was used as an aid in the creation of nations: 'it was especially the novel as a composite but clearly bordered work of art that was crucial in defining the nation as an "imagined community."' ⁴ Whether an active partner in the nation-building project or a separate but parallel development, the novel's association, even today, with a particular national language makes it a suitable medium for communicating the thoughts and concerns of a particular nation. ⁵

The Emigrant Novel

Having contributed to the exploration, definition and 'conquest' of the national landscape the novel may serve a similar function in relation to a foreign location, using comparisons with the now familiar national landscape to consolidate its earlier achievements in creating a national awareness. By highlighting differences between familiar and exotic, the national landscape becomes even more familiar and precious, especially when the characters that appear in the foreign setting bear the hallmarks of national archetypes, *i.e.* they represent the physical and mental ideal as defined in the national ethos. A novel about emigration, often referred to in the Scandinavian languages as 'emigrantroman', is the ultimate example of a national novel in a foreign setting. Typically concentrating on a group of emigrants rather than an individual, it examines the ways in which a collective (a mini-nation) reacts when confronted with 'otherness' – physical, climatic, linguistic etc. The characters meet this challenge with various degrees of success, and it is worthwhile asking whether either success or failure are linked to the authors' ideological interpretation of emigration and their understanding of their role as, among other things, mediators of national values.

The emigrant novel may be interpreted on various levels and in many different ways, one of the most common is by focusing on the universality of its theme, as noted by Russell King, John Connell and Paul White, editors of *Writing Across Worlds*.

Literature and Migration (1995): 'population dislocation and mobility give rise to a certain repeated set of themes and images whatever the spatial setting.'⁶ Nevertheless, a close examination of Scandinavian emigrant novels may also reveal a certain national bias, or in other words, a preoccupation with the particular rather than the universal. The suggestion that many such novels are concerned with conserving established national patterns overseas will be examined in the following. The point of departure will be that the emigrant novel, written and published in the emigrants' country of origin, contributes more to fortifying the national identity of those who remain in that country than it does to understanding other places, other cultures. This is not to say that all emigrant novels are 'national' novels in the narrow sense of the word. Indeed, as the following analysis will demonstrate, some authors have used this literary form to question prevalent social conditions in their homelands, although it must be stressed that criticism of the homeland – its authorities, political and social structures etc. – is not the opposite of an attempt to convey national values. In the majority of the texts, and despite the fact that the immigrants are technically no longer a part of the nation, their characters tend to be emblems of what is perceived as national virtues such as diligence and honesty. Generally, the focus remains the homeland. Although not necessarily the dominant location, the homeland provides most if not all of the novel's values and ideals, and all of its main characters. One must, however, remember that these features are, of course, also typical of the double perspective which is, by definition, the immigrant's perspective.

In her study of Scandinavian emigrant novels, *Draumen om fridom og jord* (1989), Ingeborg R. Kongslien defines an emigrant novel in the Scandinavian context simply as a text that deals with Scandinavian emigration to North America,⁷ although, as she points out, 'termen emigrantroman er ikkje eit etablert genreomgrep i romanestetikken'.⁸ At the same time she also provides a broader definition of the emigrant novel: 'det er ei forteljing om mennesker som bryt opp og vandrar frå noko kjent inn i det relativt ukjende. Dei forlet heimlandet for å skape seg eit nytt tilvære i eit ukjent land. Oppbrotet er forårsaka av undertrykking og nært av draumen eller visjonen om fridom og sjølvrealisering; dette er kreftene som driv utviklinga

framover.⁹ Kongslien's observations correspond with an earlier attempt by Kjetil A. Flatin to define this specific literary form. In an article titled "Historisk roman – emigrantroman" (1977) he notes the timelessness and placelessness of the emigration motif, and links it with the universal myth of the hero's journey. 'At reisen aldri blir fullført fordi helten aldri vender hjem er nettopp det element av tragedie som gir emigrantromanen dens spesielle karakter.'¹⁰ Yet he acknowledges that in Scandinavian critical terminology, 'emigrantroman' is used exclusively in connection with novels about Scandinavian emigration to America. Furthermore, despite the fact that Norwegian literature abounds in texts that contain an emigration motif, as Jørund Mannsåker has demonstrated in his comprehensive study *Emigrasjon og diktning: Utvandringa til Nord-Amerika i norsk skjønnlitteratur* (1971), the number of novels that may be classified as 'emigrantromaner' in that they have emigration as their central motif is in fact fairly limited.¹¹

Earlier still, Sophus Keith Winther, in an essay titled "Moberg and a new genre for the emigrant novel" (1962), has argued that the criteria applied in the criticism of 'typical' novels is irrelevant to the emigrant novel, which has its own unique form. The urgency of movement – away from and towards something – but often without a dramatic build-up towards a climax or a resolution of a conflict determines its structure, which explains why it may appear to have a weak plot structure, or lack a plot altogether. Consequently, and due to the fact that the theme of migration is both ancient and universal, Winther calls for recognising the emigrant novel as a separate genre.¹² However, in this study the emigrant novel will be referred to as a sub-genre and not as a separate genre for the following reasons: firstly, it is safe to state that most novels contain timeless and universal themes, and yet are not labelled as distinct genres. More importantly in this context, the emigrant novel's kinship with the national novel, as defined above, is of particular interest to this study. The distinctions are too blurred to justify a separate classification.

Embracing Flatin's observation about the tragic consequences of the broken mythical cycle as a general characteristic of the emigrant novel, in this chapter the limited and conventional usage of the term – a novel about emigration to North America – will

be broadened along the lines suggested in Kongslien's second definition, and made more open-ended in order to include a wider selection of novels. Thus the definition of the emigrant novel in the following will be a working definition aimed at facilitating the discussion on the language of emigration rather than providing a new definition of the sub-genre. Some of the texts included in this chapter are indeed on the periphery of the subject – geographically, chronologically or thematically. They were chosen from a wide variety of Norwegian and Swedish texts, and not necessarily for their literary merit or popularity, but rather for their representative qualities. Hence the inclusion of, for instance, Kåre Holt's novel for young readers (*Cleng Peerson og Nils med luggen*) and Leonard Strömberg's *När prärien blommar*, which may be classified as 'triviallitteratur'. Some lesser-known writers are included and several better-known ones are excluded. In sections 2 and 3, texts that cannot be defined as emigrant novels even under a broad definition will be discussed, since they contribute to the understanding of the sub-genre by highlighting points that are expanded upon in emigrant novels, discussed in the latter part of this chapter. The chapter will in some ways attempt to imitate the process in which the phenomenon of emigration infiltrated into the consciousness – of prospective emigrants and then of authors – and the way in which it was transformed from being a remote option into a daily reality. Yet the books mentioned here are not introduced in the chronological order of the events depicted in them nor of their date of publication. Instead they are grouped under theme headings, and build up towards presenting what is in many, if not all respects a 'typical' emigrant novel, based on the criteria outlined below.

Some Distinctive Features of the Emigrant Novel

Before turning to specific texts, a few more general hypotheses on the emigrant novel will be presented. These will be tested on the texts in the following sections.

As noted in Chapter One, history presents Scandinavian emigration as a success story, while literature emphasises its tragic sides. This is possibly literature's *raison d'être* – what in daily life passes almost unnoticed, becomes a 'theme' in literature. The experience of uprooting, however, cannot be trivialised, if for no other reason then because it contains an inherent ambiguity. Once people emigrate, their sense of

'home' is forever confused, and, as the editors of *Writing Across Worlds* have formulated it, 'what ensues is a permanent mobility of the mind, if not the body, a constant dual or multiple perspective on place.'¹³ Whereas early novels were characterised by horizontal simultaneity and mobility of both narrator and characters, the novel genre tended to evolve towards a non-omniscient – and by implication a less mobile – narrator. In the emigrant novel this gap widens even further: while the characters are physically and mentally unfixed, the narrator is, to a certain extent, immobilised by the national viewpoint, although this immobility is, of course, ideological rather than technical. The simultaneous nature of the emigrant experience also has a temporal facet. Immigrants, real and fictional, live in two sets of place and time – not only in the *here* and *there* but also in the *now* and *then*, 'since the past is not only another country but also another time, out of the present.'¹⁴ Thus the emigrant novel is, by definition, multi-dimensional.

The parity between the experience of emigration and the novel's intrinsic capacity to convey multifariousness – geographical and mental – results in a strong realistic trend that appears to characterise the majority of emigrant novels. The term 'realism' is a complex and often ambivalent one, but in this context reference is made to the broad definition given in J.A. Cuddon's *Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory*, based on what realism is *not*: 'fantastic, improbable, fanciful, of the dream world.'¹⁵ That so many novels about emigration can be classified as realistic may seem surprising, because most of their dominant structural components – the journey, the foreign setting and the adventure – sometimes, but by no means always invite a less realistic treatment. However, since these three structural components are to varying degrees 'neglected' in the emigrant novel (the foreign setting is 'neglected' in the sense that it is described without genuine interest),¹⁶ the overall impression is that the emigrant novel is more concerned with the familiar, with the 'here and now'¹⁷ of the realistic novel, and implicitly with the emigrants' country of origin. Yet, while the treatment of plot in the emigrant novel places it within the realistic tradition, the so-called 'ordinariness' of the main character/s, typical of the realistic novel, is slightly more ambiguous in the emigrant novel. Although most fictional emigrants represent, in contemporary terms, society's lower-middle classes, some

texts, as will be demonstrated, tend to idolise them. Hence the ‘ordinary man’ of realistic novels becomes an ‘extraordinary man’ in emigrant novels.

Despite the fact that on the individual level the emigrant novel often attempts a psychological analysis, for many authors emigration as a literary theme is first and foremost associated with the practical, social, political and economic aspects of the historical phenomenon. Most of them view the theme as necessitating taking a stand on the *actual* phenomenon. Although a distinction must be made between those who write while mass-emigration is taking place – their writing may be regarded as part of the pro- or anti-emigration debate – and those later writers for whom emigration is a historical phenomenon – such a distinction appears almost irrelevant in the context of this study. The extent of the authors’ involvement in the social and political aspects of the emigration debate (occasionally as opposed to their involvement with the personal ones, conveyed through individual characters) is surprising. It suggests that any comment on the phenomenon, even fifty years after it ceased, might have ideological implications.

As noted, more often than not immigration is perceived in tragic terms. However, it must be stressed that this is not the same as presenting it as a failure. One of the most common literary devices for conveying this poignancy is emphasising a sense of displacement, an inability to adapt to a new landscape while at the same time fulfilling its material potential. This landscape, as noted in the previous chapter, is characterised by an overwhelming horizontal dimension and an absent vertical one. It is perceived as empty. New words and terms must be invented in order to understand and describe it. In conclusion to her book *The Nature of the Place*, Diane Dufva Quantic writes:

‘The important point, finally, is not the simple language or the stark prairie landscape. Nor is it merely the recognition that commonalities exist. Similarities could arise from an endless stream of imitation. Certainly, literary tradition influences these writers even as they work to create language from what they *see*. But in Great Plains fiction the common elements that inform symbols and images, language, attitudes, and values arise from the land itself and from the emotional significance people assign to place.’¹⁸

Quantic seems to be suggesting that Great Plains literature is more direct in its attitude to place, since the place itself is so overpowering that it competes with literary conventions to create an adequate imagery, and prevails over it. While this may be true of writers with a personal experience of the Plains, like Rølvaag (see section 7 below), how can one understand the way in which distant observers, in this case Scandinavian authors, describe this landscape? Are they not resorting to literary convention, is their experience of the place not second-hand? This question is a good illustration of the gap that may exist in Scandinavian emigrant novels between the narrator's view/experience and that of his or her characters.

Since immigrants have a conceptual rather than an informed and concrete image of their receiving country, many develop a sense of rootlessness, after exchanging a strong attachment to place – however displeasing this place may be – for an unfocused ideal. In due course the concrete place left behind will become the longed-for place, as expressed by Sandemose in *Det svundne er en drøm*: 'Utvandrerer [...] kommer aldri hjem. Når det er gått mange år mister han rotfestet, nasjonaliteten, og da ser han den som noe som hadde vært verd å ha.'¹⁹ In the emigrant novel this may be expressed by the use of positive descriptions of the familiar landscape, and negative ones of the foreign. Endowing landscapes with positive or negative qualities is the emigrant novel's most effective method of avoiding political and social criticism, implied in almost every account of emigration. Norway and Sweden may have been socially oppressive in the 19th Century, but their natural beauty, especially when glimpsed at from afar, compensates for it and becomes a value in itself. It is at any rate the case, as Dorothy Burton Skårdal notes, that 'practically every discussion of motives for Scandinavian emigration emphasized that those who left sought to change their social and cultural environment, not their native geography.'²⁰

As observed in Chapter Two, writers frequently employ biblical imagery to convey the spiritual world of their characters. Since many of these writers are not familiar with the foreign landscapes, or indeed the experience they are describing, they themselves often resort to the biblical narrative for inspiration. The theme of the emigrant novel, as Kongslien notes, 'viser tydeleg samanheng med det gamle eposet;

det er både elementært og universelt.²¹ The 'old epic' is, of course, the *Exodus* narrative, an obvious literary convention to draw upon when one wishes to attribute mythological meaning to a concrete act of migration. This does not mean that direct biblical references are found in every single text. Interestingly, if the national epic novel (set in the homeland) to a certain degree substituted the universal Bible in its role as an ideological guidebook, the emigrant novel's relationship with the Bible is more complex, since the latter is often its source of inspiration – literary and spiritual. At the same time the emigrant novel, as suggested, is strongly preoccupied not with universal values but with inward-looking national ideals, which brings into question the effectiveness of biblical imagery in a 'national' text like the emigrant novel. One may therefore ask whether biblical allusions and imagery are a *necessary* component of the emigrant novel, or merely a literary device that functions mainly on the aesthetic level?

2. BROADENING HORIZONS

On the Emergence of Emigration as a Literary Theme

As mentioned in Chapter One, emigration from Norway started earlier and was, in relative terms, greater than Swedish emigration. This may explain why the America motif appears more frequently in Norwegian texts, and why, to a greater extent than their Swedish counterparts, the country's prominent writers were from the outset involved in the emigration debate.²² During the early phases of emigration, the subject, when treated in literature, was used to demonstrate disloyalty to the homeland and/or reckless adventurousness, perhaps even insanity. Whatever the ideological or psychological interpretation – generally a negative one²³ – emigration was perceived as an uncommon and extreme alternative. In parallel with the increasing popularity of emigration as an option from the 1860s onwards, Scandinavian literature was moving towards more realistic writing, and America gradually became a common literary motif – either central or auxiliary – simply because America itself became an integral part of daily life. Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson, previously opposed to emigration, developed an ideological fascination with America and the freedom it offered. Also Henrik Ibsen and Alexander Kielland were attracted to the democratic and liberal impulses from the New World, believing such

impulses could improve Norwegian society. The ideological debate set aside, these three authors used emigration as a realistic motif in their writing, as did Jonas Lie.²⁴ Thus it appears that most Norwegian writers, including the country's 'fire store', in one way or other acknowledged the significance of the phenomenon. America's place as a symbol and/or as a concrete location in Norwegian literature was secured. As indicated, Swedish writers were slower in realising the potential of emigration as a literary motif, although the theme is not entirely absent from fiction in the late 19th and early 20th Century.²⁵

America as a Subsidiary Character

In countless novels and short stories, particularly those written during or about the last quarter of the 19th Century, and the first quarter of 20th, America appears as a background motif. It plays the role of a subsidiary character that, according to the author's views on emigration, tries to entice characters away from their homeland; tears them away from family and friends; makes them unrealistic and greedy or robs them of their vitality and youth. Alternatively, it provides them with a means of escape from romantic or familial conflicts; a chance to prove their strength and abilities and an opportunity to gain social standing and material success. These are the basic America motifs found in various combinations and with varying degrees of impact on the plot. In the majority of these stories, whether sympathetic or critical of the emigrants, the rudimentary assumption is that any social or material achievement in America will be at the cost of roots, culture and spirituality.

In Arne Garborg's writing, emigration appears as both main and background motif. His novel *Fred* (1892) is a study of the effects of the 1860s shift from barter to money economy on Enok Høve, a farmer whose character, in a story with a strong autobiographical element, was likened to Garborg's own father.²⁶ Hoping to find peace the anxious and confused Enok adopts a strict form of Christianity, while his son, Gunnar, stifled in the pietistic environment, decides to emigrate: 'Det fanst då berre eit utveg: Amerika.'²⁷ Losing his son to the New World implies death not only for Enok, but also for the Old World order and traditions, which he so strongly believes in. The use of the America motif in *Fred*, as in several other novels, some of

which are discussed below, demonstrates its complexity. It is a concrete location with direct impact on the plot, although the narrative is set in Norway and America remains the abstract and almost insignificant ‘away’. At the same time it is an ambiguous symbol of both desired and destructive change. While *Fred* looks at the devastating effects of change at home, from the mid-1890s Garborg took an active stance against emigration, emphasising the disastrous consequences it can have for those who go away.²⁸ In *Den burtkomne Faderen* (1899), considered to be one of Garborg’s most powerful works, the old and dying Gunnar returns home disillusioned, having failed to find peace in America. Garborg confirms the now widely held view that America is synonymous with spiritual barrenness.

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A variation on the theme of America as the only means of escape – this time from poverty and social injustice – appears in Vidar Sandbeck’s relatively recent novel *Månen lo over Ravneberget* (1979). The story is set in Granum, on the banks of the Glåma in Hedmark County, and centres around Palmer Jensen, a cottier’s son whose siblings have all emigrated to America. It spans from the late 1860s until the 1880s – peak years of emigration from Norway.

For those who live in Granum, the small community is ‘hjertet i verden’.²⁹ This ‘heart’, however, does not symbolise attachment or affection, at least not to begin with, but a narrow world characterised by destitution and lack of opportunities. The only other location in the novel is the rather transcendent America (‘gull-landet’ [6] ‘eventyrlandet’ [15]), the sum total of Palmer’s longing. Sandbeck portrays Palmer with great sympathy and is outraged, on his behalf, over the fact that decent, hardworking men like him are caught in a trap of poverty. It is ‘det mørke svelget som rådde her heme mellom fattig og rik, [som] næret Amerikadrømmen.’ (6)

Perhaps due to its socio-historical agenda, *Månen lo over Ravneberget* is entirely devoid of any specific Christian images. Life in Granum is harsh, cold and gloomy, and its antithesis is an open sunny landscape where one’s efforts are rewarded by both nature and society. Throughout the book Palmer thinks of America as an ‘eventyr’, in his dreams it is associated with wealth and security, and somewhat

unusually for novels about emigration, with a joy of life. Whereas destitute cottagers were encouraged to resign themselves to their lot and look forward to a blissful afterlife ('Uten bibeltrøst og løfter om salighet tel sist, ville det bli meningsløst å oppfylle husmanskontrakta. Småmann måtte gi de utvalgte fred tel å eie jorda, Gud var streng her – for å slå om og bli fattigmannsvennlig når husmann låg i kiste. Og de fattige gledet seg tel døde–', 38), America represents achievable happiness in *this* world. Palmer's fantasies are secular, but with their emphasis on a benevolent sun they shed most of their materialistic connotations, thereby acquiring poetic, if not spiritual, qualities. Here is how he imagines his arrival in America: 'en kjempeby på begge sider av en solblank fjord, lyse, vennlige hus kring byggverk og tårn, som nådde langt inn i himlen. Over åsen gikk det en vei – der oksekjerrer ség fram under skyfri himmel. Glade emigranter lo mot sola' (103). And when he has built his new home on the prairie: 'Sola sto høgt på himlen. Han pløyde og sådde. Avlinga duvet i solbrisen – for det var alltid sol i Amerika!' (103-4)

Although America is never thought of in direct sexual terms, the common metaphor of America as a beautiful, sensuous woman is implicitly used when Palmer falls in love with Sara, and for a time his yearning for America abates. As long as Palmer has faith in their joint happiness – despite material hardships and an oppressive farmer to whom he is enslaved – the woman in his life fulfils the same function as 'eventyrlandet.' However, once the struggle for survival, and not least the desire for independence and dignity, again begin to dominate Palmer's thoughts, he revives his America dream, only this time Sara and their children are a central component in it – they are now part of his extended self. Palmer's loyalty to Sara does not, in his view, contradict his desire for another 'woman'. Typical of the emigrant novel is the female character's reluctance to emigrate. While Palmer painted their future in bright colours, Sara 'mente det var noe eget ved heimlandet.' (103) The woman stands for roots in the Old World; the man is drawn to the New.

Tragically, Sara drowns a few days before their scheduled departure. With her death the dream of America dies as well. Palmer's personal tragedy is however accompanied with a moral. Some time after Sara's death, Palmer's brother Ole, who

emigrated 23 years earlier, arrives in Granum. His appearance is enough to indicate that emigration was a mistake: 'Ingenting hos den lange, magre, benete mann – minte om den bondesunne, kraftige gutten som drog ut frå grenda.' (153) Ole is a broken man whose sole wish in life is to see his home in Granum once more. He provides the final nail in the coffin of Palmer's America dream: 'den evige sol og velstand han alltid hadde drømt om [...] forgikk, mens broren fortalte om tørke, prairiebrann og haglbyger' (155). But rather than feeling disillusioned, Palmer feels relieved:

'underlig nok kjente han ei fredfull ro sige over seg da amerika-glansen bleknet og drømmen gikk under. Det var som han hadde bori en skjør ting forsiktig gjennom mørket, og han Ole plutselig rev et slør bort så drømmen smuldret i det sterke lyset. Granum og Amerika fløt sammen – på husmannsplass og prairie såg han bare bøyde rygger, de evig bøyde husmannsrygger! Palmer avskrev for alltid Amerika, og det var som skogen og grenda pustet befriet.' (157)

Despite the resignation implied, Sandbeck ends his novel on an optimistic note. At this stage Palmer has written America off without discovering the virtues of the homeland. Indeed, as noted earlier, Granum's inhabitants have not yet developed a wider national awareness, and their horizon is extremely limited. However, as the narrator informs us, the equality and respect Palmer and his like hoped to gain in America gradually become prevalent ideals in Norwegian political thinking. Palmer's long years of yearning are rewarded without the homeland having to pay the price of his leaving.

Emigration or Proletarianisation?

In Kristofer Uppdal's semi-autobiographical *Vandringa. Øl-Kalles ferd* (1923), the process of urbanisation and proletarianisation, emigration's twin socio-economic phenomena,³⁰ is discussed through the story of Kal Ølstad. It starts on a small farm and ends in Kristiania – the process is complete when Kal Ølstad 'disappears' and Øl-Kalle emerges.

When the socio-economic developments of the 1860s and 70s were coupled with bad crops, many were forced out of their native rural surroundings and into towns, or away to America. Since the city and America represent the imposed departure from the home, both are treated as the same kind of solution, although in reality

emigration to America often implied a possibility to preserve an agrarian lifestyle, while internal migration implied a dramatic break from it. Conveying a tragic sense of loss, Kal's 'vandringa' is portrayed in extremely negative terms. Already as a four-year-old Kal is made to promise his mother never to leave home: 'Du maa aldri fara ut du, ikkje! Maa bli heime, du! Bli bonde!'³¹ Her anguished attempt to make the child promise what is not up to him to keep holds a deep sense of foreboding. Not long afterwards, when Kal's father is no longer able to hold on to his farm, Kyrkje-Skei, the family moves to a nearby town. Preferring urbanisation to emigration suggests that Kal's father believed that staying in the vicinity of the farm would allow him to buy it back some day, perhaps he hoped that the break from home will not be as painful. But many others from the same parish choose America instead: 'No held dei paa og flyt heile bygda over til Amerika. Og daa blir det ikkje meir langsamt der, enn som heime. Ein blir daa millom sine, der òg daa.' (40) In *Emigrasjon og dikting: Utvandringa til Nord-Amerika i norsk skjønnlitteratur*, Mannsåker confirms this to be a relatively common motif in emigration literature. Along with the more obvious pull-factors – cheap and fertile soil, civil and religious freedom etc. – America was attractive because the usual settlement pattern of Scandinavian immigrants in the Midwest allowed for the creation of small enclaves which resembled, at least in their social make-up, the settlers' 'original' communities. Thus in order to maintain the continuity of one's daily social interaction with friends and relatives, one was often compelled to emigrate. At the same time America was becoming a fashion, particularly among young people who were in fact *expected* to want to emigrate.³² Kal's aunt, Inga, is such an example. Although emigration is the result of a negative process, it is viewed in a somewhat positive light because it is linked to youth and optimism. It also appears to be, at least in Inga's case, a matter of *choice*: 'De eldre talar um dei tronge tider [...] Mange ungdomar i grenda har alt fare dit. Snart er det svart for ungdom paa sume gardar. [...] Eg òg har faatt lyst til aa reise [...] Eg *skal* fara. Eg er bestemt.' (34)

The decision not to uproot the family from the homeland leads to a series of tragedies, since urbanisation nonetheless involved painful uprooting. In addition, it exposes the members of Kal's family to the alienation typical of town life, and for

which none of them is prepared. Selling the family farm is perceived as betrayal, and is punished by an inability to thrive anywhere.³³ There is however one indication that America is the lesser evil in the choice between urbanisation and emigration, presumably because the former implies enslavement and degradation, the latter offers some hope of freedom. Whereas Kal grows up in poverty and neglect, becoming a petty thief and later an abused farmhand, his aunt Inga is prospering in America, and it is on her farm that Kal's brother Paal finds refuge from the hardships in Norway. Kal's other brother, Ola Peter, who comes to live with their father in town, dies of a lung disease that kills their sister Gunil as well. At the same time the image of America as the land of infinite freedom is marred by Paal's letter, in which he criticises the American justice system that allows criminals to be lynched by a mob without trial (206). This detail, which does not contradict the sense of material security America has to offer, indicates that the New World is still associated with barbaric practices and does not offer the security which an established cultural or social tradition presumably gives. America is depicted as a massive pantry – bountiful, generous – but totally devoid of civilisation and spirituality. Uppdal's America is in many ways inferior to Norway, and those who emigrate do so for practical reasons, *i.e.* it is first and foremost an economic decision. The fact that despite his great suffering Kal Ølstad emerges as a hardened proletarian with the potential to fight for the cause of his fellow workers makes Uppdal's view on emigration even more ambiguous.

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Another account of the process of proletarianisation appears in Harry Martinson's autobiographical *Vägen ut* (1936). Like *Vandringa*, its plot describes internal migration, but what Uppdal's Kal experienced as a longing back to the unspoilt life on the farm is transformed, in the case of Martin, Martinson's protagonist, to a longing forward, and away. The 'away' is undefined, and the longing is not specifically a desire to emigrate, with its implications of settlement in another place. However, in the world Martin grows up in America stands for freedom and better opportunities, and therefore figures in his fantasies of long-distance voyages. In a symbolic scene, Martin, still at school, draws the contours of the American continent on the blackboard. Although the map is an abstraction of the concrete place, America

is much more than a geographical location. Martinson's novel clearly demonstrates how, by the turn of the century, America has become the most common expression of the longed-for place, so common in fact that no other nouns or adjectives are needed. As such its link with the real America becomes even looser, and in the case of proletarian writers like Martinson it seems that America is simply a synonym for change, although, ironically, the change they want to bring about in Sweden is not inspired by American ideals. Martinson, like Uppdal, does not accept that abject poverty – material in the Old World, spiritual in the New – are the only options. A social revolution is the way forward.

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Vilhelm Moberg's *Soldat med brutet gevär* (1944) provides an illustration of the way in which the choice between proletarianisation and emigration was often a random one. Among people of the same background, even within the same family, some chose or were forced to emigrate, others to become paid workers. Typical of the work produced by many of the Swedish Proletarian writers in the 1930s and 40s, *Soldat med brutet gevär*, like Martinson's *Vägen ut* and Ivar-Lo Johansson's *Godnatt, jord* (1933), is a Bildungsroman with strong autobiographical elements. A central theme in these novels is the conflict between a growing awareness of collective despondency and the desire for and faith in individual achievement. An attempt to reconcile the two by agitating for greater class-consciousness and social improvement is consequently their main agenda, beyond any literary aspirations. By implication they can be read as anti-emigration tracts, although the object of criticism is Swedish society rather than the emigrants themselves. In fact, Moberg grew up admiring his American relatives and was always fascinated by America, as he writes in his essay "Romanen om utvandrarromanen": 'Ordet Amerika hör till de första ord jag som liten lärde mig uppfatta och känna igen. [...] och detta land låg på andra sidan av ett stort hav, den oändliga Oceanen, och så fjärran från vårt eget, att det nästan inte var riktigt, inte verkligt'.³⁴

From a historical point of view, *Soldat med brutet gevär* presents a microcosm that accurately reflects general social and political developments in modern Sweden. It also captures their proportions: for every emigrant there were dozens of rural

inhabitants turned urbanised workers, and it is they who transformed Swedish society into what it is today. It is therefore historically correct to put emigration in the shadow of proletarianisation and urbanisation, and indeed, as the novel progresses, America features less and less, until it disappears. Once Valter Sträng, Moberg's fictional *alter ego*, decides to use the money of his America ticket on getting himself an education, it becomes clear that emigration is rejected as an option. However, although written before he engaged himself with the fate of the emigrants in his four-volume emigrant epic, also in *Soldat med brutet gevär* Moberg's attitude towards those who emigrated is generally positive. If there is a negative element in his description of emigration, it is the fact that poverty drove people away from Sweden – *i.e.* emigration was hardly voluntary, as Valter formulates this: 'Här i Sverige föddes man och växte upp. Till Amerika for man, när man blev stor.'³⁵ Since emigration is not presented as a matter of choice, Moberg does not analyse the emigrants' psychological or moral character, nor does he make a qualitative distinction between those who leave and those who stay. Nonetheless he does lament the fact that Gunnar, his closest brother, lacks class-awareness and therefore contemplates joining the army – the army that will most probably crush a proletarian uprising, if and when it occurs. In order to save him from the evils of militarism, Valter secretly organises Gunnar's trip to America. Emigration is thus the only solution for those who will not or cannot join the class struggle, in which Valter becomes so involved.

Early in the novel Moberg demonstrates that national awareness hardly existed before the notion of another place challenged it. As a child Valter familiarises himself with his surroundings, developing at the same time an awareness of the faraway place – 'Amerika' – 'A-merika', 'Merrika' and finally – 'Mer rika', the place where people are richer (21). But as yet he does not know the name of his own country. When his father mentions Sweden, 'fosterlandet', young Valter wonders where that name stems from. It is not as obvious as that of America. As his class awareness develops Valter distances himself from notions about nation and race. His hard physical work on the peat-bog makes loving the land in an abstract, figurative way almost impossible. Thus he comes to the conclusion that 'han älskade inte

fosterlandets jord. Han ville bort. [...] Arbetaren har inte fosterland.' (241) As in the works of Uppdal and Martinson, the choice is not between the homeland and a foreign land, but between two types of awareness – the individual and the collective.

Although Valter's view of America is positive – in many ways it is more of a home to him than Sweden because his siblings all live there and appear to be thriving – he cannot overlook the desolation it creates in Sweden. For every new piece of land conquered by immigrants in the New World, an Old World home is laid waste: 'Det låg många öde ställen ute i markerna [...] alla stigar som lett till platsen var igenväxta. I trädtopparna runt omkring susade det söcknigt och ängsligt, som av saknad efter ett föregånget: Öde! Övergivet! Aldrig mera!' (66) The desolation of the rural landscape is an example of the way in which the consequences of emigration are likened to a process of death. Perhaps a more widespread metaphor is the collation of emigration itself, or the state of being away, to death. In an article titled "Geography, Literature and Migration", Paul White confirms that 'one of the commonest uses of migration as a literary theme has actually been as a metaphor of death.'³⁶ Throughout the novel Moberg applies this metaphor and elaborates it. From the mother's (called 'soldatens Hulda' throughout the text) point of view, watching her children leave is equivalent to following them to their graves, knowing full well that despite their promises to come and visit, she will never see them again. And yet America provides for them better than Sweden, which for her is the known world: 'Hon hade fött sina barn för en annan värld än sin egen. För soldatens Hulda var Amerika ett övergångsland mellan denna världen och evigheten.' (320) As a child, Valter too wonders whether those living in America, although well and healthy, are not in fact in some way dead: 'De var inte döda, men de levde inte heller i den här världen. Så blev Amerika för Valter liksom en värld utanför denna, där hans syskon levde kvar, men där de försvann som hade de gått bort från livet för alltid.' (67) The ambivalence in the use of the death metaphor throughout the novel is two-fold. Not only does the metaphor contain an awareness that those living in America in fact have a better life than those living in Sweden, but it also contains criticism of the Lutheran state church that uses its oppressive power to convince simple people that they must suffer poverty in this life in order to become worthy of a blissful afterlife.

In other words, it suggests that in some ways ‘death’ in America is preferable to life in Sweden. Part of Valter’s struggle as a youth is to come to terms with death in a secularised, materialistic world. But for many of the same background, death is perceived in positive terms – it signifies a move to a better world, and hence its usefulness as an image for life in America.³⁷

Moberg’s realism dictates an honest presentation of the push-factors that determined Swedish emigration to the New World. In his tetralogy he will add an idealistic and idealised element to characters like Karl Oskar and Danjel Andreasson (see Chapter Four below), but in *Soldat med brutet gevär* it is poverty and lack of opportunities that compel people to leave. This is illustrated graphically when Gunnar departs. He and Valter walk on the narrow path that leads away from their hut, symbolically named Trångadal, and Valter comments: ‘Det var en trång väg till Amerika’, to which his brother replies: ‘Det blir mer svängrum ute på Atlanten’ (172). All prospective emigrants were familiar with tales of America’s incredible expanses, almost all of them experienced Sweden’s ‘narrowness’ – physical, social and religious. Emigration is literally a process of broadening horizons, but as mentioned, this broadening comes at a price. Although Moberg does not, in this novel, discuss the difficulties experienced by immigrants, Gunnar’s meaningless death in Minnesota suggests that the price they had to pay was too high for what they got in return.

3. OBSERVATIONS ON THE EMIGRANT’S PSYCHE

In the texts discussed in the following section the attention of authors is turned towards restlessness, although actual emigration is still a relatively minor theme. They focus on changes taking place in the Old World in order to explain the psychological background of emigration, but their observations and conclusions are to a large extent influenced by their understanding of ideals such as patriotism and individualism.

Emigration: Betrayal of Traditional Values

In *Landstrykere* (1927), Knut Hamsun gives an in-depth analysis of the causes of emigration, placing emphasis on the sense of rootlessness that was brought about by the rapid social and economic changes in the 1860-70s. Like Garborg, Hamsun became a fierce opponent of emigration, and did not accept poverty as justification for it. Despite his unsympathetic assessment of the typical emigrant, he demonstrates that emigration is the inevitable result of a process in which people's attachment to their place of birth is weakened, leading to a permanent state of restlessness and discontent. Indeed, Hamsun's emigrants wander aimlessly and generally do not resemble typical fictional emigrants who settle in rural America and attempt to make it their home. What they do have in common with many fictional immigrants is the inability to strike roots in a new place.

The novel's two main characters, Edevart and August, are first introduced as two opposites. The former a naive introvert, rooted in his home community of Polden, the latter a rootless extrovert. They become business partners and close friends, first complementing each other with their very different personalities, but gradually resembling one another more and more. However, while August thrives on variety – of business ventures, settings and women – Edevart, the weaker element in this duo, becomes a victim of diversity. Once the outside world begins to transform Polden, Edevart loses his bearings and is unable to find peace either at home or elsewhere. After his first journey away from Polden he comes back to a changed community: 'Han møtte ikke den gamle trohjertethet, hjemligheten var blit borte, uskyldigheten sjeldnere, det var blit en anden tankegang.'³⁸ Change, then, is the novel's true villain, and there are countless references to its corrupting influence, even before emigration to America is mentioned.

When people start thinking differently, their aspirations are modified accordingly. In Hamsun's view people have become too spoilt, too greedy, and the portrayal of characters that represent this development is filled with scorn (for example Lorensen and Lovisa Magrete): 'Det syntes som alle folk var blit for stort vant og nu ikke kunde finde sig i en regulering av løn og levemåte. De var blit fanget av en håpløs

utilfredshet, pokker skulde leve på mindre løn – var ikke Amerika der! Alt var blitt forvrænget og ukjent for menneskene' (142). As a psychological push-factor, a sense of dissatisfaction is inseparable from a feeling of restlessness. Hamsun, however, makes a moral distinction between the two. Restlessness is the result of social and economic changes which Edevart, in his innocence, becomes prey to. He is therefore portrayed with great empathy: 'Hvad var iveien med Edevart? Hans hænder var store og stærke, hans sener i orden, men hans sind var splittet. Her seilte han væk tom og hjemløs, han var litt isenn blit fra intet sted, hvorhelst han flakket om drog han røtterne efter sig.' (172) Incidentally, the restless young man, uprooted from what Hamsun perceives as an ideal rural environment, exposed to town life and thereby 'ruined' also appears in Hamsun's best known novel *Markens grøde* (1917), in which Isak Sellanraa's eldest son, Eleseus, emigrates to America.

Although America offers the opportunity for a fresh start, Hamsun derides it for its claim to 'newness'. In *The Cultural Life of Modern America*, published in 1889 after his second stay in the United States, he claims that there is no such thing as an American culture, and that the little there is of culture is neither new nor American.³⁹ America might be a new place for the immigrants, but they infest it with all that is bad and deplorable in the Old World. The fact that Edevart is presented as honest, strong and handsome indicates that he is too good for America, in stark contrast to other portraits of immigrants (such as Moberg's Karl Oskar, see section 2 in Chapter Four below), who are destined to succeed in America *because* of their impressive appearance, vitality and integrity. Hamsun, however, does not regard material success, even if honestly achieved, as a sign of worthiness. In his eyes the desire for material betterment is deplorable, and he mocks those who emigrate by trivialising their motivation. Since Hamsun views America as totally lacking in culture or spirituality, it can only have a corrupting effect on people: 'Amerikafarerne skrev nu sjeldnere, de blev i det fremmede, blev yankee'er, indlevet sig derover og ringlet med sølvdalere i lommen. De unge som for over begyndte å bli mere og mere sparsomme med å sende understøttelse hjem til de gamle som var blit tilbake, i nogen av brevene klaget de over dårlige tider også i Amerika' (190). But they are not really wanted in Hamsun's Norway anyway, as the diligent farmer Karel explains: 'Har du

hørt værre! De får ikke rosiner og gotter nok herhjemme og så stryker de av landet! Det er nogen overløpere er det, lat dem bare stryke! (278)

The readiness to believe rumours about America's abundance is an indication of rootlessness, since it implies a rejection of the homeland as the ideal. Lovisa Magrete is an example. She tells Edevart about the pamphlet she has obtained:

‘Det er om Florida i Amerika. Der har jeg ikke været, men det må være det gildeste i verden. Det er så synd du ikke kan læse det, for her står alt mulig om landet og indsjørerne og jernbanerne og hvad som vokser på farmene. Vil du bare se for nogen skilderier her er, med farver og rødt på eplerne og grønt på vindruerne og gult på hveten og blå på plommerne – å, det vokser alle mulige ting der, og aldrig blir det landet fattig og usselt som her.’ (252)

From this description it is evident that the information about America was often based on propaganda material – distributed, as in this case, by immigrants who visit the Old Country and try to convince others to join them. Although they have already experienced the New World, they do not hesitate to sell old illusions – for as the above quote shows, America *is* an illusion – beautified artificially with lovely, but misleading, colours.

Once affected by dissatisfaction, and having given up their traditional lifestyle, the immigrants cannot hope to ever be content. Even those material improvements that are tangible, such as a richer diet, are paid for by uprooting, which is, as Joakim, Edevart's brother, expresses it, too high a price to pay: ‘Jeg tror nu ikke at nogen har godt av å bli hjemløs og flakke rundt, vi skal være der vi hører til. [...] Hører vi bedst til der vi får mere mat, bedre klær og flere penger? [...] Vi blir ikke lykkeligere invendig om vi gjør det noget fetere for os.’ (328) Hamsun was by far the most outspoken in his anti-emigration views, but then he belonged to a minority of Norwegian writers who travelled to America not as established artists, but as penniless but hopeful immigrants. His personal experience lends authenticity to his observations on rootlessness and restlessness, and his well-known views on ethnicity and culture provide the ideological framework for the ideas expressed in *Landstrykere*.

America in Norway

Similar in many ways to Hamsun's *Landstrykere* is Bjørn Rongen's *Det drar ifra vest* (1939). Set in Norway's Vestlandet and roughly covering the period 1860-1890, it is a novel in which America looms large in the background, although none of its main characters ever emigrates. Rather than being a concrete destination, America is used throughout the book, often sarcastically, as a symbol of change, progress and prosperity.

The novel opens with an avalanche in which two girls die. The tragic event leaves its mark on the whole community, but can also be read symbolically as a turning point in the region's history. Before examining the after-effects of the social and economic avalanches of the 19th Century, Rongen presents the inhabitants of the fierce and rugged landscape as an integral part of the natural surroundings: 'Det var et karrig land, og et karrig folk som budde der.'⁴⁰ However, in a brief attempt to outline the region's history, or perhaps pre-history, Rongen shows man to be a relatively recent arrival in the primordial landscape. Significant for the novel's preoccupation with the East-West axis is the fact that those first settlers arrive on the coast from the west. Gradually they become attached to the land and call it '*heimen*', although it is anything but hospitable: 'Uår og ulykke, sykdom og død klarte aldri å drive dem bort dit de kom ifra. Ingen visste lenger hvor de kom ifra, de trudde til slutt at de var fødd på åkrene som gav føden.' (16) This attachment to the soil, ironically strengthened by the obstacles that nature (or God) imposes on man, is expressed throughout the book in various statements such as: 'Ingen makt var så sterk som kravet om jorda, ikke kjærlighet, ikke redsel, ikke hat.' (17) One can safely conclude that the soil is the novel's supreme value, and all attempts to replace it with other values are bound to fail. Yet, as Hamsun has shown, the world shrinks and changes whether people want it or not. It is therefore possible to read Rongen's novel as a debate on how to best preserve this traditional value in the face of inevitable change. America, the epitome of change, is throughout the text referred to as a fabrication. Although it attracts emigrants mainly for its abundance of fertile land – *i.e.* an ideal that does not contradict the traditional one – it is regarded with great scepticism. Old people in particular consider stories about fields of self-sown wheat as lies spread by

emigration agents to lure young people away from the homeland. The restlessness that characterises the young and feeds the America Fever, is interpreted by the old as a sign that the end of the world is nigh.

Having made his views on America clear, Rongen turns his attention towards the young Ole from Storvik. Like Hamsun, Rongen claims that young people have become self-indulgent and are therefore unable to cope with the challenges presented by a country like Norway. Ole is a typical example: 'han tok til å bli utålmodig. Han hadde ikke tid å vente som de gamle, han hadde ikke år å gi bort til steinrøyser og slett-skarv, nå tok han til å merke slitet i ryggen. Og da tenker mannen, om han kan komme lettere fram i verden, om han kan sno seg oppover uten ryggslitet.' (71) Yet while Ole may be restless like Hamsun's Edevart, he is enterprising like August, and it is this crucial point that makes *Det drar ifra vest* significantly different from Hamsun's lamentation of the passing of 'the good old days' in *Landstrykere*. Rongen has a pragmatic attitude to change, even if the spirit of this change is associated with America, the country that has robbed Norway of many of its finest young people. When Ole dreams of his future opulence he dreams like an American – he will have the biggest farm, the biggest ox and the biggest cows in the whole country; he will even have his own church, the biggest there is. Reality is, of course, very different. Ole's life has its ups and downs, but he stays in Norway with his dreams, works hard and is rewarded by winning the woman he loves as well as respect and material success: 'Ole Bergane⁴¹ gikk sine egne veger, han skapte seg et Amerika der han var fødd, det var en sta drøm han skulle oppfylle. Nå tok han til å se resultatet, *det* var hans liv.' (239)

If Norway's transformation into a modern and capitalistic democracy was inevitable, it is thanks to people like Ole that the process was as painless as possible. By remaining loyal to the place he was born in he made the unavoidable 'Americanisation' of Norway more bearable. Ironically, when, towards the end of the novel, a Norwegian-American tourist comes to visit his forefathers' home, he fails to notice any dramatic changes, although he does acknowledge that old houses have been torn down and new ones built in Sanden, the community's trading centre. In a

short, diary-like entry intended for the readers of a Norwegian-American newspaper whose editor the visitor is, he emphasises two themes, which the narrative so far seems to have contradicted: a sense of continuity, and peace or tranquillity ('fred'). These two features of life in Norway figure prominently in the romanticised and nostalgic image immigrants have of the homeland they left behind. From a Norwegian-American point of view, Norway's majestic and unspoiled nature *is* the country, and that which was an endless and backbreaking, often futile, struggle to eke a living out of it has become a symbol of the only really meaningful thing in life: a home. Thus the real 'crime' of emigration is not the greed or the indolence associated with it, but the uprooting of man from his natural habitat: 'De var slik, disse folka, de levte med jorda som alt annet i naturen, sleit og elsket, og dro de bort var det bare lengten som gav hjertet liv.' (240)

An Empathic View of Emigration

In *Emigranter* (1904), Hans E. Kinck attempts to understand the psychological background to the restlessness, which resulted, among other things, in emigration. Unlike Hamsun he does not have ideological objections to emigration, although his sympathetic portrayal of those who wish to leave is also a somewhat gloomy acknowledgement that had things been different, many would have chosen to stay in Norway.

Emigranter's historical setting is familiar: a small community exposed to rapid changes in all aspects of life. The theme of mobility is introduced from the beginning by setting the story among boat-builders. The traditional craft of boat building, a former source of livelihood as well as a sense of identity, is being threatened by mechanisation (the building of a railroad), tourism, popular education (part of the 'folkehøyskole' movement) and pietistic evangelism. The restlessness of the younger generation is initially expressed in their attempt to build a different kind of boat. The old boat-builders, who see themselves as bearers of tradition, sense that this 'revolt' is threatening the integrity of the community: 'Vigleik strakte sine båtbygger-never mot himlen og bad om talens gave [...] Han talte om uroen hos menneskene og tørsten efter å forsøke nytt og vrake det gamle og prøvede – han pekte hele tiden ut

av nøstdøren, over mot den nye båt. Det var i grunnen en forgåelse imot det fjerde bud. Det hevnet seg slikt [...]’⁴² But nothing ties the younger characters to their native landscape once it loses its familiar features. An attempt by the energetic Gunvor Grimm to stop emigration by making the place more pleasant to live in, re-introducing traditional customs and improving education, is ironically described by Kinck as doomed to failure, for what is defined by the cultural élite as ‘national’ (*i.e.* typical Norwegian) is in fact foreign to most. The ‘imagined community’ is so far removed from the concrete one, that its inhabitants long to be elsewhere.

Through Dr. Røst Kinck expresses understanding and respect for those who long to get away. The literary analyst Rolf Nyboe Nettum has observed that ‘utlengselen er og blir en av livets store verdier’ in Kinck’s writing,⁴³ and in *Emigranter* Kinck laments the stubborn desire to hang on to the familiar on the pretext that it is tested and therefore good. Mobility – mental if not physical – is a vital force without which life is meaningless. Expressing a desire to emigrate, whether it is practical, desirable, justified or not, is a sign of life. It seems that the authorial voice in *Emigranter* favours America as an option not so much for what it is – in fact, there is little information attached to the mention of America – but for what it *might* bring about. Although not said explicitly, emigration could allow people to develop themselves as individuals. As much as the concept of the nation was central in turn-of-the-century Norwegian writing, Kinck maintains that there can be no collective identity or culture (‘nation’), unless the persons who form it are strong and independent as individuals. However, although it is implied that America is a haven for individuals who wish to celebrate their freedom, Kinck does not overlook the material aspect of emigration. For many of those who want to leave the incentive is purely economic. In that sense one can read a hidden criticism of the materialistic spirit of the times, associated entirely with America. What was previously an acceptable standard of living is now perceived as degrading. America therefore does not represent high values, it might even be an illusion. Nonetheless, on the psychological level emigration – whether real or imagined – answers the need to save oneself from stagnation.

4. GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION AND CHOICE OF IMAGERY

Having explored some aspects of the background to emigration, we now move to texts that describe emigration and are set in both the Old World and the New. Although historically there have been examples of Scandinavian settlement in Australia, New Zealand and Latin-America (see pp. 34-37 above), emigration from Scandinavia in the modern period is invariably linked with North America. Since the focus of this study is the literary language of emigration rather than its history, there seems to be little sense in excluding novels with other geographical settings, although the bulk of the works available reflects the phenomenon's true proportions and deals almost exclusively with North America. Any conclusions drawn about novels not set in North America are therefore based on fairly limited material. Despite the fact that in principle texts set in North America and texts about other parts of the world are treated in much the same way in this study, in the following an attempt to find differences in the use of imagery in novels with different geographical settings will be made. The first part of this section will deal with North America, the latter with other parts of the New World.

A New Eden?

The story of Erik Janson and the Bishop Hill colony (see pp. 15-16 above) has been a source of fascination for several writers, among them Moberg and Hauge. In a book titled *Det nya Eden* (1934), Per Nilsson-Tannér uses the Jansonite awakening as the background for 'a rather torrid and fictitious love story', as Alan Swanson writes in his article "*Där ute: Moberg's predecessors.*"⁴⁴ Although lacking in real literary quality and psychological depth, this novel nonetheless provides an interesting example of the use of biblical imagery in relation to the New World, and the way in which the authorial voice conveys notions about religion and the nation through a debate on emigration.

A forbidden love between the socially inferior farmhand, Bengt Dellner, and the wealthy, and married, Margareta Bolling is at the heart of this novel, but Nilsson-Tannér, in his modest way, charts various other push and pull factors through subsidiary characters and stories woven into the plot, even if these factors are not

presented in their 'correct' historical order of importance. In that sense he may be viewed as a precursor to Moberg and his encyclopaedic account of the various reasons for emigration. Bengt, young and strong, but without any real prospects in class-divided Sweden, is presented as an adventurer, driven by curiosity and a desire for freedom: 'De främmande världarna och folken och tungomålen hade varit hans livs lockelse genom alla dessa år i fattigdom och slit. Hans enda dröm hade varit att få göra sig fri och komma ut.'⁴⁵ Appropriately, his fascination with America is linked to his physical strength and his adventurousness, not to his moral or religious disposition. He is one of the few characters whose view of America is utopian but *secular* ('nya öden, nya möjligheter... tusen chanser', 133), and is the only one who perceives emigration in terms of the heroic Norse past: 'han [ville] söka sig en gråriggad skuta och fara som en viking mot främmande kust.' (133)⁴⁶ For Margareta, escaping to America with Bengt is the only alternative to a loveless marriage with Ingel Bolling. When Bengt romantically suggests a joint suicide, Margareta proposes America instead. Again death and emigration are presented as somewhat similar solutions, although here emigration can also be understood as the *opposite* of death. Although there are subtle hints throughout the text regarding Margareta's simultaneous revulsion-fascination with Erik Janson, which might have affected her decision to leave Sweden, it seems that in her case the desire to escape is the only noteworthy push-factor. Other characters represent different minor push-factors such as guilt – the maid Maria for accidentally causing spinal damage to the pastor's son, and Lagers Erik Fredriksson for causing his wife's death while persecuting Erik Janson. Janson's doctrine, which cleanses his followers of sin by the simple act of joining the sect, is an appealing solution for both of them. Others have more mundane reasons. Matti Pekkinen, for instance, senses better economic possibilities across the Atlantic. They all join Janson's exodus and become part of the Bishop Hill tragedy.

Central to the novel is, of course, the push-pull factor pair of religious persecution and religious freedom. However, as Janson's character is presented as negative from the outset, there is no real debate on religious intolerance, as the narrator seems to justify the authorities' persecution of the 'Prophet'. There is, however,

acknowledgement that Janson's personality aroused extreme reactions in those who came into contact with him, and in the case of his enemies that sometimes resulted in senseless violence and vengeance. For his followers, on the other hand, the Janson rhetoric stands for purification and regeneration, and the necessity to flee their persecutors, in combination with Millennial visions of the New World, creates the right formula for group emigration, or in other words, an apparent balance between push and pull factors.

Throughout the book the narrator makes use of two central biblical images for America: 'Kanaan' (or sometimes 'det nya Kanaan') and 'det nya Eden', occasionally changed to the more general 'paradis'.⁴⁷ Before and during the Atlantic crossing, and while travelling over the Illinois prairie, the two images appear no less than 25 times. They reflect first and foremost the Jansonites' interchangeable and possibly random use of these images. For instance, just before the immigrants' arrival in the colony, the narrator describes their feelings as follows: 'Man stod äntligen vid gränsen till det nya Kanaan, Det nya Eden, med de ädla frukter och den honung, den glädje och sång, som alla dessa landsflyktiga med sådan bävan hade sträckt sina armar emot!' (222) Later on the same page the place is referred to as 'lustgården', and it is thus clear that no specific aspirations are linked with it but rather a general sense of bliss. However, whereas the characters make no distinction between the two images, the authorial voice reveals a slight preference to the term 'det nya Eden', possibly because it is a more powerful image than Canaan, and therefore better conveys criticism of Janson's evil and even criminal abuse of his followers' faith. In most cases in which 'det nya Eden' is used it is, in fact, used ironically. As they approach Bishop Hill, a split occurs between the biblical rhetoric, still dominated by Eden and Canaan, and the actual descriptions, which are based on common images of hell: 'De hade hört talas om jordbävningar, om hagelskurar, om skyfall – de befunno sig i ett förbannelsens land. Och de hade hört, att ibland kunde prärien börja brinna – brinna som helvetet självt' (213). When disease and Janson's tyrannical behaviour turn Bishop Hill into a death trap, biblical images of bliss appear less frequently, and when they are applied they convey scepticism on the part of the characters or sarcasm on the part of the narrator. Gradually the words 'Eden'

and 'Kanaan' are replaced by the word 'helvete' (for example on p. 252). By this stage, even the most dedicated members of the colony see it for what it really is.

The alternating use of the images of Eden and Canaan may also suggest another subtle distinction between the two. Since the Exodus story involves movement, verbs and nouns related to movement appear in conjunction with the image of Canaan ('föra', 'gå', 'vandring'). This does not mean that such words do not appear in combination with 'Det nya Eden', nevertheless it seems that Eden, being, as mentioned, the more powerful image, is more closely related to a state of mind – be it religious ecstasy or a sense of personal freedom – and less to a place. This is confirmed in the closing pages of the novel, when the two lovers manage to escape from hell (*i.e.* Bishop Hill), and stand 'på gränsen till ett gudaskönt, nytt land' (272). Although at some distance from Bishop Hill, this new land is not objectively different. However, Margareta and Bengt have been transformed and are now 'nya människor', about to enter their own private 'nya Eden'. This is the only time the term is used without irony. Whereas Nilsson-Tannér rejects the idea of a collective new Eden or Canaan, based on biblical concepts, he promotes the notion of a personal Eden, at least as a literary device, to conclude a novel about the triumph of love.

It has already been stated that Janson is portrayed as a thoroughly corrupt and evil character. For that reason alone the narrator may present the decision to follow him to America as misguided. There is, however, another reason, and that is the land itself. Despite the fact that some of Janson's followers were landless and destitute, the Sweden they leave behind is presented as both fertile and beautiful: 'Jorden var välsignat god, den doftade så frodigt och bördigt.' (63) There is no sense in seeking a new Canaan if the land one is leaving comes quite close to the ideal. Although written at a time when emigration had become a historical fact, *Det nya Eden*, first and foremost a moralising tale about the power of love, and in that sense timeless and placeless, is also a warning against forsaking that which is familiar and traditional for the unknown and unusual: 'Gud såg med vrede på den folkspillra, som i ett främmande land sökt Det nya Eden men funnit en öken och en kyrkogård.' (269)

A New Jerusalem?

As noted earlier, literary accounts of immigration tend to emphasise the tragic aspect of that experience and are, at best, ambiguous towards it. Sam Rönnegård's *Salemsborg* (1940) provides the reader with a moralising and less equivocal account of what could be termed a successful attempt to establish a New Jerusalem in the Kansas prairie. It is not a rewarding book for those who wish to gain an insight into the individual's experience of emigration, but its lack of psychological depth is compensated for by its wealth of images – both biblical and national. Nor does *Salemsborg* conceal its own identity as a religious tract with a clear evangelical message. Its evocative title in many ways encapsulates the entire novel, suggesting both spiritual perfection and fear of its destruction: 'Salem' is the Hebrew root for both 'peace' and 'whole', and is used in the Old Testament as a poetic name for Jerusalem,⁴⁸ while 'borg' may be translated as 'fortress', 'stronghold', 'castle', or 'refuge'. It is also used metaphorically in phrases like 'Vår Gud är oss en väldig borg'.

The book's opening chapters are set in 1868, a year of crop failures and great hunger in Sweden, which contributed to the first waves of mass emigration. Reminiscent of Lagerlöf's portrayal of the Dalarna farmers (see Section 4 in Chapter Four below), Rönnegård introduces the inhabitants of Västerby and the nearby Österby, concentrating on Tolvmansgården, a respected farm that has been in the hands of the same family for generations. He shares Lagerlöf's admiration for the rooted farmer and his traditions, as well as the natural beauty that surrounds him. And as in *Jerusalem*, the Heavenly Jerusalem is present in the text from the outset. First it is a purely religious concept, as Erik, eldest son in Tolvmansgården, reads about the golden city in John Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress*, and soon afterwards, blinded by the sun over Middagsberget, imagines he is looking at the heavenly city. Later, following a wave of awakening that sweeps across the parish, the concept of Jerusalem is combined and perhaps confused with the more concrete possibility of establishing a new city in America.

However, another factor makes Rönnegård's landscape distinctly different from Lagerlöf's, and marks it out as a place where change is not only inevitable but also desired. The land is impoverished, its people, apart from a privileged few, are hungry. The material factor is a major ingredient in the push-pull formula, and one that usually takes precedence over the spiritual one. Crop failures or lack of arable land, as well as social injustice, figure in most novels as the basic precondition for emigration. Here, the author's religious agenda means that concrete hardships are translated into spiritual anguish and desire for enlightenment, although material push-factors are not entirely overlooked.

The homeland is presented in more or less naturalistic detail. Illness, extreme poverty, suicide, a fatal accident and an attempted murder all feature in the section of the novel set in Sweden. The aesthetic quality of the country is emphasised from the start, but as Pastor Hansson admits, 'verkligheten bakom den vackra ytan är inte så tilltalande.'⁴⁹ Only before leaving Sweden does Erik realise how painful the separation would be, not least because departure means severing ties with one's history:

'Det var dock ett härligt land i all sin fattigdom. Och här hade hans fäder bott i många tusen år. Under otroliga mödor och strider hade de byggt detta land, odlat dess jord, brutit dess malm, byggt kyrkor och skolor. Och hela denna brokiga vävnad av heliga minnen och traditioner hade de vävt, medan sekler och släkten avlöst varandra.' (99)

This vertical perception of man's attachment to place – incidentally based on hardship and strife – is in contrast to the common perception of America as horizontal. When trying to convince himself that the sun is the same sun and God the same God also in the New World, Erik comes to the conclusion that 'det var bara den skillnaden, att där fanns så mycket större utrymme [...] än här.' (99)

In 1869, having sent a 'spy' to inspect their prospects, a group of born-again Lutherans, led by Pastor Hansson, leave Sweden 'för att bygga upp ett nytt samhälle, där de skulle få dyrka Gud i frihet' in 'ett nytt och fruktbart land, som bara väntade på inbyggare.' (98) The assumption that the land is simply waiting to be cultivated is typical of the European approach towards the New World, and *Salemsborg* conforms

with this line of thought, although it warns settlers of being over-confident of their success. In the Old World, man was engaged in battle with the soil, and this confrontational attitude is imported to the New. Although a 'fruktbart land', Rönnegård somewhat paradoxically presents the land as an 'ödemark' possessing 'skrämmande makt' (215); the wilderness – with all the negative connotations civilisation has attached to it – is also referred to as a 'fiende' (216) that takes revenge in the form of hailstorms, grasshoppers and droughts upon those who try to subdue it. According to the narrator, it takes a group of pious, strong and hardworking Swedes to tame it.

The first few years in America are, as expected, trying, and the land is described in ambiguous terms. It is perceived as a capricious entity, but perhaps it is also an indication that the immigrants themselves have no real feelings or understanding towards it. The prairie is both colourful with wild flowers *and* monotonous; it is full of potential *and* dangers. Whereas in most accounts of settlement in the wilderness the potential and the dangers are concrete, in *Salemsborg* they are spiritual as much, if not more, than real. It is at this point that religious and national ideologies begin to play a key role in the text. The endeavour of individual settlers and their ability to gradually establish themselves in the new land are not enough. Pastor Hansson is only interested in personal achievement in as much as it reflects the success of the collective, and the collective is to be judged not only upon its material success, but also upon its spiritual accomplishments. For this purpose the new city of Salemsborg will shut its gates to non-Lutherans, and surround itself with a figurative wall of unshakeable faith. The vertical element, a sense of history, is to be supplied by time-honoured Swedish traditions – we have already seen that memories and traditions are referred to as 'heliga'. Customs, especially those related to ecclesiastical matters, provide the foundations of the new community. Thus Rönnegård presents a formula for a successful immigration: pride in one's national heritage and Lutheran belief, and constant striving for moral betterment. While many authors present the process of immigration as a fall from grace – the mundane takes over the spiritual or the idealistic in the struggle to survive, and then, when material security is gained, eliminates all traces of non-materialistic preoccupations, thereby leading to a sense

of homelessness – Rönnegård ends his novel on the same visionary note he opened with. A choir of Swedish immigrants sings Handel's 'Messiah' in the town's spacious new hall. The earthly Salemsborg is prosperous, but it has not neglected its spiritual growth. With the celestial music in the background Erik, now an ordained priest, again sees the 'real' Salemsborg, the Heavenly Jerusalem, while Pastor Hansson catches a glimpse of something in the distance, presumably a similar vision.⁵⁰

That the Salemsborg venture is crowned with success does not mean that Sweden is forgotten. Upon arrival in the Kansas prairie, Sweden is immediately enshrouded in nostalgic mist and is thought of as a 'svunnet paradisland' (109), or a 'förlorat paradis' (117). The terms 'paradise' or 'Eden' are never used to describe America, although it is sometimes envisaged as 'löftets Kanaan' (100) or simply as 'Kanaan' (103). The most common image is, however, that of the Heavenly Jerusalem, an image that fits in well with the group's evangelical creed. As mentioned in the previous chapter, biblical images associated with Canaan are to a certain extent beautified terms for secular aspirations. They were the expressions emigrants used to refer to fertile land and civil liberty. However, when a group of like-minded emigrants sets out to fulfil its members' role as 'God's Children' (a common term for those who experience a conversion), it needs a model for a collective that is associated first and foremost with spirituality, and includes an earthly element only by implication. If the Bible is a narrative that develops towards perfection, those re-enacting it must turn to its closing act for inspiration. The vision of Salemsborg is therefore urban, perhaps as an antithesis to the agrarian perfection of Sweden, which has become the lost paradise. By placing the Garden in the East, in the Old Country, and the New Jerusalem in the West, Rönnegård forms his East-West axis on the biblical conception of the beginning and the end of time. This vision is at the same time incorporated into the modern notion of the homeland as the sacred or meaningful place.

The Full Cycle: To Canaan and Back to Paradise

In an ambitious four-volume project, Sven Delblanc has captured the pendulum movement between the Old World and the New as the alternating location of the longed-for place. In *Samuels bok* (1981), Samuel Eriksson and his family are introduced against the backdrop of turn-of-the-century Swedish society. Samuel, whose charismatic father was a lay-preacher persecuted by the authorities in Sweden, has grown up in America where he was ordained as a priest, and throughout his life it remains a symbol of freedom, equality and opportunities. Back in Sweden he struggles to be accepted, gradually losing his mind and finally dying in a mental hospital. The main role of America in *Samuels bok* is to be the anti-thesis of prejudiced and class-conscious Sweden: 'utvandringen, drömmen om Amerika [...] var den stora tanken för min generation. Åt Värmlands jord gav vi våra dagars svett och möda, åt Amerika våra drömmar var ledig stund.'⁵¹

Towards the end of the second volume, *Samuels döttrar* (1982), Samuel's daughter, Maria, finds herself on the infinite Canadian prairie after her husband, Fredrik, decided that there was no future for him in Sweden. *Kanaans land* (1984) describes their years in Canada. It opens with a reference to God's promise to lead His people unto a land flowing with milk and honey, and uses the image of Canaan ironically throughout the text, although for Fredrik Canada is and remains the Promised Land. The tone of the third volume is ambiguous towards immigration. Its disastrous impact on the land's native inhabitants is acknowledged, and white culture is referred to as 'mördande',⁵² clearly a reflection of the time and atmosphere in which the novel was written. At the same time immigration has a similar effect on the immigrants themselves, and only few withstand its trials. Maria represents the hardy Swedish stock, held in high esteem in America, and therefore expected to survive and thrive. But as a woman she is portrayed as sentimentally attached to the homeland and the past. She reproaches herself for her misery but is still unable to find any comfort in the new land. During her ten years in Canada she witnesses the land's immense potential and fertility, but these never make up for its harshness. When the good years of the late 1920s turn into the bad years of the 1930s, the settlers are faced with catastrophe, 'typisk för detta förlovade land, som så ofta var ett hemsökt Egypten.'⁵³

Unusually for emigrant novels, the tetralogy also includes a return to the homeland. In *Maria ensam* (1985), the family is back in Sweden. The Great Depression made life in Canada so difficult that Maria succeeded in convincing Fredrik that Sweden is 'paradiset på jorden'.⁵⁴ Fredrik continues to view Canada as 'Kanaans land', while Maria desperately tries to find her paradise in Sweden, symbolised by an unkempt orchard which she has no time, energy nor means to revive. Her attempt is doomed to failure because it is only rare moments in her childhood that are the paradise she is seeking – she is longing back in time rather than space. Life in Sweden soon becomes unbearable, and Maria's son, Axel, dreams himself away to an imaginary 'land som är avlägset land',⁵⁵ which demonstrates that once migration is introduced as an option, the inevitable consequence is a permanent state of homelessness.

The Original Paradise?

In Nilsson-Tannér's *Det nya Eden*, and typical of literary descriptions of North America, the affix 'new' in names like Eden or Jerusalem indicates an awareness of the novelty of the whole immigration and settlement venture. Very few regarded the northern part of the continent as the original setting of any biblical place-event, although many hoped to establish a new version of such a prototype. In all matters, as demonstrated above, North America was associated with change and 'newness'. But what associations were attached to the southern part of the continent? Did its assumed political and social backwardness influence the choice of imagery used to describe it? In the following, three texts that deal with emigration to areas south of the United States will be examined.

In Chapter Two the generic paradise has been defined as a place of perfection, commonly represented as a garden or an island. After the 'discovery' of the New World, the islands of the Pacific Ocean and the Caribbean Sea began figuring in novels as concrete paradises regained.⁵⁶ In *Utvandring till paradiset* (1979), Artur Lundkvist builds on this literary convention to tell the macabre story, which he claims is based on historical fact, of the immigration of a few hundred Swedes, mostly poor people, to the paradise island of Tobago, with the intention of colonising

it. It takes place during the 17th Century, a time when Sweden was a European Empire with dreams of expansion. Significantly, the destination in this novel is referred to as 'paradise', and not as the Promised Land or the Heavenly Jerusalem, nor as a 'new paradise'. This indicates faith in the ability to return to a primordial stage in human development, to erase all marks of 'civilisation', whether political, social or psychological. The development of the literary concept of the Promised Land out of the concept of Paradise, with all the former's ethnic, religious and political implications, reflects the psychological process of exploring and understanding the New World, a process which has not yet come to an end. *Utvandring till paradiset* is a multi-layered text in that it imitates the 17th Century's childish interpretation of the newly discovered world, acknowledges the 19th Century's more active and cynical vision of this world, and views it all from the vantage point of 20th Century disillusionment and need to re-evaluate previously held convictions.

Like its prototype, the paradise of *Utvandring till paradiset* was simply there to be enjoyed. Apart from the journey itself no real effort was required of the immigrants. But the novel makes clear, in the most brutal way, why the New World could not be imagined as Paradise for a very long time. All but one of the immigrants are destined to be killed and devoured by Indian cannibals, presumably (according to Lundkvist's note at the end of the novel) sent to Tobago by the Dutch as a means of ridding the island, and the area, of Swedish presence. Once the tragic events begin to unfold the narrator employs images of hell in order to describe the irony of trying to colonise 'paradise'. However, up to that point the debate about the possibility of a paradisiacal existence on earth is more ambiguous. Although the immigrants themselves are mostly dissatisfied or disillusioned with life on the island, their surroundings do, to some extent, correspond to what they initially longed for: warmth, abundance of fruit, freedom from authorities and from hard work. In what appears to be a study of the Swedish psyche, Lundkvist shows that his characters ultimately belong to the landscape into which they were born, and that even an apparent improvement in conditions will not lead to happiness if it implies uprooting from the homeland. The move from the frosty North to the Tropical South is particularly extreme. The

Swedes are used to hard physical labour, but in a place where work is unnecessary they become listless and morally corrupt, at least from Pastor Ellman's point of view. He watches with dismay as his herd break down all social conventions, especially those concerning sexual behaviour. The world-renowned Scandinavian work ethic is a decisive factor – and a prominent motif – in stories about successful immigration. In *Utvandring till paradiset* its suppression can be seen as one of the causes of failure. Even if it is possible to physically adapt oneself to new surroundings, one's mentality cannot be changed.

However, this is not a 'national' text in the narrow sense of the word. The longing back to Sweden, a feeling that awakens in the immigrants soon after their arrival in Tobago and long before their lives are threatened, is a natural reaction to a new place, and does not necessarily imply that the old place is objectively better. In fact those who are lured into this cruel adventure are the same people who in Sweden paid the highest price for the country's unjust social system. The text is openly critical of Sweden's dreams of world-wide military dominance. If there are villains in this tale they are the power-hungry leaders – whether Swedish or Dutch – who use their own people for political purposes. Their hunger for power is effectively illustrated with the motif of cannibalism. Like other texts that compare the Old World with the New, *Utvandring till paradiset* contains the sad discovery that violence and cruelty are, contrary to a widely held romantic view, hallmarks of humankind rather than the products of European culture.⁵⁷ But rather than accepting this fact the novel carries a clear pacifist message by being so explicit in its descriptions of brutality, both on the battlefield in Europe and on the 'peaceful' island.

Lundkvist's assessment of this specific adventure, and, it seems, of the general obsession with expansion and plenitude, ends with the conclusion that some dreams are better left untouched. Attempts to find paradise on earth will ultimately lead to hell: 'Var det en ny form av syndafallet som drabbade deras paradiset? Frågade de varandra hånfullt. Skulle nu livsfaran och döden lura på dem ur snåren och slå ner ibland dem utan vidare? Var det därför de kommit hit?'⁵⁸ *Utvandring till paradiset*,

with its gruesome plot, is to be read as an allegory. Had it been written, say, in the 1860s, it would have been a useful weapon in the anti-emigration campaign. As an ideological manifesto it states its agenda – in a prologue titled ‘Det förlovade landet’ – by indicating that the story about to be told is doomed to end tragically. The Promised Land of the prologue is seen from Moses’ point of view, the point of view of the one who is never allowed to enter it. Traditionally his death before completing the greatest task of his life is perceived as tragic, but Lundkvist uses this image to point out that the Promised Land can only fulfil its promise if it remains a fantasy, something to long for but never enter: ‘Och han slapp ifrån bakslaget, motgångarna, striderna, splittringen, missnöjet, avfallen: all den besvikelse som annars skulle ha förbittrat hans sista tid.’⁵⁹ Since he refers specifically to the figure of Moses Lundkvist must use the term ‘the Promised Land’ as a synonym for ‘paradise’ as it is used in the main body of the text. Nonetheless the novel’s most powerful image – of longing *and* of disillusionment – is that of paradise, which corresponds both to the historical period and to the geographical location in which it is set.

Another Paradise Island

In *Akamai. Sagaen om den norske utvandring til Hawaii* (1975), Jon Moe approaches the subject of paradise islands soberly and pragmatically. It tells the story of the 1881 organised emigration of several hundred Norwegians to the sugar plantations in the islands of Hawaii (see p. 37 above), and is based on historical events and figures, without any of the romanticising or philosophising that are typical of novels set in the Pacific Islands. Henrik Christian L’Orange, the man behind the venture, is portrayed positively throughout the text, although there are indications from early on, confirmed towards the end of the novel, that he was careless in selecting the ‘right’ people for emigration. His negligence resulted in a string of disappointments and confrontations between immigrants and employers in Hawaii, rumours of which circulated back to Norway, and leading to the popular view that Hawaii was a paradise-turned-hell for the innocent Norwegian immigrants. Moe’s account is an attempt to set the record straight by presenting a balanced and well-documented, if somewhat dull, version of events.

A notice in the “Drammens Tidende” excites the imagination of hundreds among the poor and unemployed, promising free passage to the Sandwich Islands and a three-year contract of work in the sugar plantations. The ‘Hawaii-Fever’ that spreads among the prospective emigrants was nourished by the dream of the Paradise Island, where warmth, abundance and idleness prevail. The first-person narrator, Johannes Baglien – incidentally, a 12 year-old child – expresses their optimism as follows: ‘Store forventninger begynte å vokse seg enda større [...] Hawaii! Det var noe som lokket med solskinn og palmetrær og sukker. De palmene jeg så i Drammen ble virkelige palmer. Og jeg syntes at sukkeret ga full mening til strofen i julesangen om det “søde paradis”.’⁶⁰ The first impression of Hawaii is also promising, but in a different way. The landscape is reminiscent of the homeland – ‘Hawaii var et land som lignet Norge på en prikk’ – but no, ‘fjellene var likevel ikke som i Norge, de var mye kvassere, mye høyere også.’ (49) Later on some of the immigrants are taken to work in areas whose appearance immediately indicates that the island is anything but paradise: ‘Ingen palmetrær her, nei. Ikke et grønt strå. Vi var visst kommet til en ørken.’ (53)

The narrator however repeatedly suggests that with hard work and good will, the immigrants could thrive on the island and improve their economic situation significantly. The native inhabitants are described in positive terms and at no point do they present a threat to the immigrants. Johannes states that ‘fra første stund følte jeg meg hjemme blant de innfødte’ (51), and the text is abundant in information about local history, gods, myths, traditions and idioms. This, of course, is a reflection of the time in which the book was written, and also part of the novel’s didactic agenda. Indirectly it could also be read as criticism of the majority of the immigrants who simply refused to appreciate the opportunities the island presented them with. Bitterness and frustration, especially in the Papaikou plantation, seem to have been the result of the two parties’ different interpretation of the contract that was signed. Although the narrator credits the Norwegians with bringing to the world’s attention the situation of the plantation workers – not necessarily the Norwegian ones, whom he believes were better treated than other nationalities – he still accuses them of being ungrateful towards their benefactor, L’Orange. His only wrongdoing, as

mentioned, was his impatience when selecting the emigrants: 'Jordbruksarbeidere var det han skulle skaffe, og så kom han med allslags skrot fra byene, dagdrivere, lassiser som ikke hadde gjort et dagsverk i sitt liv, kort sagt folk fra den dårligste av alle klasser i Norge.' (148)

This statement has far greater significance for the emigrant novel than first appears. It suggests, and novels examined later on will confirm, that only a *particular* type of immigrant will prosper, both physically and mentally, in the New World. The closer he is to the soil – emigrant novels tend to revolve around male characters – the more likely he is to implant himself successfully in the new soil, and reap the rewards. This ties in with the national-romantic tendencies that seem to dominate much of the ideology in emigrant novels, even in a matter-of-fact narrative like *Akamai*. Moe dispels the myth of the Scandinavian moral superiority, and at the same time contributes to the emigrant novel's myth concerning the Scandinavian immigrant's particular aptitude for hard work, and hence for successful immigration. After all, the whole venture of importing labourers from Norway to Hawaii was based on the notion that they are robust in body and soul, diligent and honest. The text contains several references to the high expectations plantation owners had of them. The explanation given to its failure is based not on rejecting the notion that Scandinavians have a particularly developed work ethic, but on pointing to the fact, that L'Orange failed to select the 'typical', and hence the best, Norway has to offer.

Snakes in the Garden

Eyvind Johnson's *Se dig inte om!* (1936) may be placed somewhere between Martinson and Moberg's coming-of-age novels, and Hamsun's study of restlessness. As such it is of no particular interest to this study. And yet, although seemingly irrelevant to the story about a few months in the life of a young boy in northern Sweden, the novel contains a section titled "Sagan om Brasiliens land", which deals with the two waves of emigration from Norrbotten to Brazil. The first one took place in the 1890s and the second, recounted in greater detail, following the Great Strike of 1909 (see p. 35 above). Although the theme of emigration is inserted into the text to convey a message about life in Sweden itself, it also provides an interesting insight into the language used to imagine and describe South America.

At the time of events, around 1910, North America was still a popular destination among Swedes. It has however become a place associated almost entirely with hard work and little reward, symbolised by the *photograph* many immigrants send home after 5 years, instead of large sums of money as they had hoped and promised. Brazil, on the other hand, is to a large extent still an undiscovered territory. As such, the prospective emigrants, all of them proletarian with a rural background, visualise it as a paradise. It is ‘Det Märkvärdiga’,⁶¹ especially when juxtaposed with the impoverished Sweden:

‘man tänkte i båge, sträckte ut tanken över berg och ocianer och lät den hamna på det som Agenturen kallade för kamposen eller riverian, och där såg man i andan en salighet som var grann som fan själv. Det var inte till att stå emot – såna feta jordbitar, där det växte bå socker och bananer och trån fulla mä limper.’ (71)

Typical of paradise descriptions is the emphasis on effortless access to food, often represented as fruit, especially exotic fruit like bananas. The emigrants ‘funderar på denna konstiga frukt, som ska se ut som en korv och smaka som – ja, man hittar inga ord för det – och så har man hört om brasilianska apelsinet, som är gult och stort som ett barnhuvud och som växer på eller runt kring eldsprutande berg.’ (72) These descriptions, spread by the propaganda of the immigration agents, are the foundation for the disillusionment that is bound to follow. The agents’ control over the emigrants’ imagination allows them to deceive by appealing to the emigrants’ deeply embedded dreams.

Ek, one of the few who come back and the narrator of large parts of “Sagan om Brasiliens land”, emphasises from the beginning the fictional element of the Brazilian promise. Apart from the rosy picture painted by the agents, the prospective emigrants obtain their information from a widely circulated book called “Emigrantens Vän, Hjälpreda för Den Svenske Utvandren av varje klass”. For some, reading this book replaces the customary reading of the Bible on Sundays, and presumably providing the same kind of comfort. For others it is a source of entertainment: ‘överallt i den finns bitar som är roliga att läsa – ungefär som en häftesroman eller följetongen i Halvveckocupplagan.’ (77) The book also contains

maps, which to a large extent determine the emigrants' conceptions of their destination: 'Det ser ut att finnas gott om utrymme i Brasiliens land. Blicken irrar över kartan och plockar åt sig av rikedomarna.' (78) Place-names on the map indicate their promising nature, Bananal and Diamatina are understood literally to represent abundance of fruit and precious stones. Two key words that are often associated with emigration, 'äventyret' and 'framtiden' (80), also appear in the text to illustrate the abstract nature of notions about the longed-for place. Since they have no words to describe the taste of bananas, and presumably all else they have never experienced, the emigrants resort to the Bible, which is still their dominant source of imagery: 'det finns saker och ting att få gratis i det främmande landet, som har ett vatten så blått som Jordanens flod och en grönska så mild och saftig som Libanons lund och Getsemane örtagård' (72). These comparisons appear to be muddled expressions of yearning without revealing a deeper interest in the symbolic meaning of the biblical images. However, since they are evoked in conjunction with the longed-for place, they also serve to make the disappointment more poignant, once reality is encountered.

Already on leaving Norrbotten a certain national consciousness awakens and with it a hesitant willingness to forgive: 'de knöt nävarna mot himlen och förlät det gamla landet, fast det i grund och botten inte var något land för människor' (80). Even if this land is unable or unwilling to nourish them, they discover other values that bind them to it. They anthropomorphise it, begin to view it as a living being that is both old – giving a sense of history, and beautiful – the attitude to the land as a provider of material needs is sublimated into an ability to appreciate its aesthetic qualities. The encounter with Brazil leads to another, more painful, awakening. The inevitable disillusionment strikes the immigrants on all levels, from the very basic – 'chokladen och vetebrödet och apelsinet' (82) they dreamt of turn out to be food that is 'förtrollad och inte god, den var illak mat, le mat, främmande' (86) – to the more general sense of paradise-turned-hell. The feeling of homelessness, which gripped the immigrants already on departure from Norrbotten, is translated into a longing for precisely the kinds of foods and conditions they previously associated with their misery: snow, herring, wild berries etc. The spuriousness of the Brazilian paradise is

concretised by the presence of poisonous snakes that claim the lives of many. Heat and disease gradually kill off the rest, leaving only few survivors. Although they continue to send 'drömbrev från drömlandet' (84), their lives become a futile struggle to adapt to a foreign and hostile landscape. The 'foreignness' of this landscape and its association with death is demonstrated by Ek, who refers to his fellow immigrants as 'döda, borta' (83); the word 'borta' can mean both 'gone' and 'away'.

There are objective reasons for the failure of this immigration venture. But on the ideological level, the obvious flaw with the dream was that it was based on indolence and abuse of human rights. Brazil allowed its European immigrants to accumulate wealth by using slaves. From a Scandinavian moral point of view this is unacceptable, as one can only enjoy the fruit of one's own efforts. On a deeper level this can be read as the narrator's criticism of those who wished to escape, not so much the hard work, but the struggle for a strong and united Swedish working class, represented by the novel's protagonist, the 16-year-old Olof, who dreams of the 'Revolution'. On a smaller scale he too is affected by the restlessness that characterised so many of his contemporaries. He travels up and down Norrbotten trying his hand at different jobs, but finally returns to the cinema where he is promoted to the post of 'maskinist'. It must be stressed, though, that the immigrants themselves are not directly criticised, because they are victims of a society that offers them no opportunities. Johnson points out that there are fertile and prosperous areas further south in Sweden, but these appear less accessible to the emigrants than the faraway Brazil. Their tragedy is that although they have already been forced off the land because the land could not support them, they have not yet exchanged the dream of private land ownership and hence the dream of a close personal relationship with the earth, with the dream of human solidarity which rules out ownership of any kind. These people are corrupted by turn-of-the-century Swedish society, since its prosperity, like their dreams, is based on enslavement, on accumulating wealth and power at the cost of the weaker members of society.

When the immigrants cry out for help from Sweden, 'det luslandet – det himmelriket' (88), the reversal process of the longed-for place is complete, but because of the novel's socialistic agenda, Sweden is still perceived in ambiguous terms. Although the immigrants have turned their backs on the class struggle, they have not committed any real act of treason against their former fellow class members. Those who stayed behind now perceive it as their duty to bring the survivors of the Brazilian saga back home. Significantly, they are not representatives of the state, who accused the immigrants of foolish and irresponsible behaviour, but people of their own class. Sweden as a nation that has in its interest the welfare of each of its citizens, regardless of their class, has not yet emerged, and Johnson uses the historical episode of emigration, with its tragic consequences, to criticise his own country in retrospect, and from a position of power, since by the mid-1930s one can talk of the triumph of the Swedish working class. Once class differences have been leveled, at least in theory, what remains is a national collective whose principles are just and egalitarian, thereby eliminating the ideological, if not material, reasons for emigration. In a text like *Se dig inte om!*, with its socialist agenda, Sweden is not likely to be portrayed as the 'real' paradise, as opposed to the false Brazilian one. Nonetheless it is clear that if paradise, or its temporal equivalent, is to be found anywhere, it will probably be found closer to home.

Degrees of 'Foreignness'

In conclusion to this section one may claim that images of the longed-for place in novels about North America are slightly different to those used in texts about other parts of the New World, presumably reflecting the fact that the north of the continent was associated with hard work and new political ideas, while the south called forth fantasies of a carefree primordial abundance. Thus the United States and Canada frequently evoke images of the Promised Land, while Latin America and the Pacific Islands are more often thought of as paradises regained. This is not to say that images associated with the Garden are absent from descriptions of North America, but their purpose is often to denote the *potential* of the place rather than its current state. Interestingly, in many novels, regardless of the setting, immigrants who suffer from homesickness come to view the homeland as their lost paradise.

Rooted in real geopolitical differences between north and south, attitudes towards them are shaped accordingly. While the American ethic of hard work and individual achievement suited the Scandinavian moral code, ideas of slavery and idleness were totally unacceptable to Swedish and Norwegian authors. When the inevitable clash between dream and reality occurs and necessitates a revision of the imagery employed, most narrators and characters draw upon images of hell to convey a sense of shock at the encounter with the unfamiliar landscape and the adversities associated with it. But while in the United States a democratic system and a large Scandinavian community offering support and a certain sense of belonging may counterbalance the hardships of the hostile landscape, it seems that in narratives set in South America and the Pacific Islands narrators make a more extensive use of extreme negative imagery. The reason for this may be, as mentioned, that immigration to these places was not seen as morally justifiable. Another reason could be that the more 'foreign' the place – and there is no doubt that, from a Scandinavian perspective, a so-called paradise island is by any criterion more foreign than the American Midwest – the more negative its description. Chapter Four will examine whether this observation could also apply to Lagerlöf's portrayal of the 'foreign' landscape in *Jerusalem*.

5. THE DIDACTIC NOVEL: THE STORY OF EMIGRATION AS PRESENTED TO YOUNG READERS

In 1814, Norway won partial independence and entered into a union with Sweden. Poets, novelists, clergymen and politicians have since been writing about the euphoriant effects of a national awakening. The Norwegian nation was born or re-born, and a wave of optimism swept the country. Shortly afterwards, in 1825, a group of 52 religious dissenters left Norway, marking the beginning of Norwegian emigration to the New World. How can these two facts be reconciled to create a harmonious chapter in history? Particularly when history is presented to younger readers, authors are bound to feel an urge to simplify facts and smooth over inconsistencies in order to present a coherent picture. Typical of this tendency is Kåre Holt's *Cleng Peerson og Nils med luggen* (1948), which, as its title suggests, deals with the first chapter of Norwegian emigration to America.

Although only two of the book's twelve chapters are set in Norway, it is still an exclusively 'Norwegian' text: its characters, according to the authorial voice, won a place in American history, but their achievements reflect and magnify Norway's glory. Throughout the novel Norway is presented in positive terms, and is the cultural and aesthetic model for life in America. The immigrants 'drømte [...] om gårder nøyaktig lik deres egne, bare større og rikere enn de var.'⁶² The group's integrity as an ethnic unit is never threatened, and the possible disadvantages of ethnocentric isolation are never discussed. The characters may be Americanised to a degree, but they always retain the core of their 'Norwegianness'. Consequently, the narrator has had some difficulty in explaining the reasons for emigration, although he does, somewhat inconsistently, mention most known push and pull factors: religious persecution (16, 21), poverty (16, 57), and a rigid class structure (15, 16) in the Old World, against fertile land (5, 20, 59), equality (56) and freedom (21) in the New. Wanderlust, adventurousness, or perhaps daring ('vågemot') are also referred to as possible motivations (57), and even a vague sense of attachment to America, which goes back to the days of Leif Eriksson (11, 87), is presented as a factor in the decision to emigrate. However, the real reason remains something of a mystery, as the following examples demonstrate. In the first chapter Cleng Peerson, having been sent by his Quaker friends in Stavanger to examine the possibilities for emigration, meets an Englishman and tells him about the beautiful country he comes from. The man then wonders why Cleng and his countrymen would want to leave it, and Cleng replies: 'Jeg skjønner det ikke, jeg heller!' (12) On his return to Norway to report to his friends he is seized with doubt: 'Med ett var det umulig for ham å skjønne at noe, noe menneske kunne reise fra et land som dette, så vakkert og fritt.' (17-18)

The book's clear Norwegian bias also explains why the immigrants' first impressions of America are negative. From their safe existence in the Norwegian countryside they are confronted with a large urban centre for the first time. New York's scale and commotion, the dirt and the heat – these are bound to upset the immigrants. But the narrator surprises today's reader with his attitude to other races. The Norwegians react with fear when they encounter a black man and a Native-American Indian,

although there is no suggestion in the text that they in any way pose a threat to the immigrants. Granted that they have never met people of other races, and were therefore unprepared for the sight that greeted them in New York, it is still striking that blacks and Indians are portrayed as 'foreign', or to use a more current term, as 'other'. This leaves the reader with the impression that the Norwegians are the locals, those whose standards and values must be imposed on the savage environment. Further proof of this 'imperialistic' attitude is found in the narrator's claim, repeated on several occasions, that although the Indians are the rightful owners of the land, 'de kan ikke bygge landet [...] de makter det ikke.' (93) The land's great agricultural potential serves as justification for disowning its native inhabitants, although, as Cleng points out, the way to fulfil it is to build rather than destroy.

Creating a link between the Quaker immigrants and the Puritan Pilgrim Fathers, mistakenly presented as Quakers as well, rather neatly solves the moral dilemma faced by the immigrants. We have seen earlier that the Norse 'discovery' of America plays a role in the formation of the reader's attitudes towards emigration. However, for the 1825 immigrants themselves, the Christian element – the desire for religious freedom – was just as significant. The Pilgrim Fathers are associated with spiritual, as opposed to materialistic emigration, and the first Norwegian immigrants historically belong to that tradition. This deviation from an otherwise consistently 'national' line taken by Holt is the only possible suggestion of an imagery gap between the narrator and his characters, although even that is debatable. After all, in a broad racial sense white Anglo-Saxons are the Scandinavians' closest kin, especially when compared to the brutal Spanish conquerors with whom neither wish to be associated.

A regular motif in emigrant novels is the formation of national and ethnic consciousness during the first phases of the journey away from the homeland. In many novels, national identity is not a product of the (fixed) place, but of the *movement* within and away from it. As Skårdal observes, it was only upon departure that 'many emigrants unconsciously took the first step toward realization that they were natives not only of a given locality but also of a nation.'⁶³ Nils – Cleng's ten-

year-old nephew and the narrator of the story – has a developed national awareness, which could be explained as such an awakening. After the family farm is sold he begins to associate the private home with the collective: ‘det var noe som hette Norge: det skjønte han da de solgte gården.’ (26) Before leaving he enjoys the last hours of ‘owning’ the land: ‘ennå hørte gården, jorda, bygda og landet dem til!’ (30), and immediately upon departure this feeling is replaced by a sense of homelessness. It is however doubtful whether a child in the 1820s would grasp the whole of Norway as ‘mine’ or ‘ours’. This attitude seems contrived, imposed upon the text to suit the novel’s ideology, which perceives possession of land as the highest value: – ‘Jord var noe utvandrerne skjønte. Jord betydde nesten mer for dem enn retten til å være kvekere.’ (55) This value forms part of the national ethos, for it is not simply a manifestation of materialism, but a sentiment that often replaces religious devotion. If the biblical view of the man-earth relationship was one of mutual dependence and antagonism, the modern version is one of attachment through trials and suffering. This is true of the immigrants’ nostalgic longing back to Norway, and is also the basis for their relationship with the new land. Following an attack of grasshoppers, the immigrants ‘kjente [...] en rar og bitter glede ved å bo i dette landet. Det var så stort alt sammen, så mye å slåss mot her. Det var plass til å leve og dø i det veldige Amerika.’ (83) The willingness to die for one’s country marks the real shift from tribal and religious thinking to secularised, national ideology.

One might expect to find examples of biblical language in a text of such clear parallels with the *Exodus* story. Curiously, *Cleng Peerson and Nils med luggen* does not contain a single reference to the Bible, nor does it assign to the Bible a central role in the lives of the immigrants. While the reason might be the author’s desire to make the reading easy and appealing for young people, it is also possible that the national agenda has taken precedence over historical accuracy and literary convention. Holt’s text is anchored in the discourse of modern nationhood and reflects the values of the period in which it was written. The fact that it was published in the post-war years may help to explain the narrator’s preoccupation with ‘Norwegianness’, which came under threat during the war. For this reason such great emphasis is placed on land ownership, not only in the narrow economical sense, but

also in the broad, abstract one. It has been noted earlier that the narrator recognises the Indians' right to claim ownership of the land, the way a nationally aware Norwegian would assert the right of his people to the Norwegian soil. It is, however, widely known that America's indigenous inhabitants did not think in terms of possession, and viewed themselves as belonging to the earth rather than the earth belonging to them. This demonstrates the narrator's (intentional?) disregard of the values and traditions in the receiving country, and the desire to impose upon them different – and presumably better – ones. Cleng's vision for the future of the first Norwegian colony in the West is accordingly devoid of religious contents. Instead it represents imported secularised ethnic/national values:

‘store grønne sletter og bakker så langt øyet rakk. Det gikk veldige kuflokker og beitet. Små hus, ja til og med byer, lå rundt omkring. Mange av gårdene lignet dem hjemme i Norge. Men for det meste var de nok større, rikere [...] Det lå en skole der borte. Og en stor flokk unger med norske, blå øyne trillet over tunet’ (111-112).

Finally, the narrator explains that emigration to America is no longer an option because the land has been taken and cultivated. But more importantly, conditions in Norway have improved significantly, and ‘I dag er det ingen som helst grunn til å reise bort fra sitt eget land for å slite seg til døde i andres.’ (136) Again the emigration/death equation is employed, only this time not intended to demonstrate the individual tragedy as much as the ideological rejection of emigration as a solution, while at the same time not denying the heroic aspects of that solution.

6. A ‘TYPICAL’ EMIGRANT NOVEL

Johan Bojer's *Vor egen stamme* (1924) comes closest to Moberg's later encyclopaedic emigration epic, at least in its intentions. It is a novel about emigration from Trøndelag to Dakota, takes place from the early 1880s until the 1920s,⁶⁴ and is occasionally referred to as a collective novel. Like Moberg some 25 years later, the collective element is not so much an attempt to elevate the group at the cost of the individual, but rather to present as broad a picture as possible, in this case of the variety of push and pull factors and immigration experiences. The novel opens by illustrating the conditions that led to emigration, and then concentrates on the first

period in the New World, the period during which expectations clash most violently with reality. It is the time when the New World makes its 'natural selection' of those who are fit to inhabit it. The narrative picks up speed after those first years, as if reflecting the rapid changes taking place in and around the new settlement of Nidaros on the Dakota prairie. As the novel progresses the broad picture makes way for an emerging main character, that of Morten Kvidal. In him the ambivalence of emigration is embodied – material success and a nagging feeling of homelessness.

In preparation for writing his novel Bojer spent no more than a few weeks in America,⁶⁵ which consequently resulted in somewhat flat psychological observations regarding the life of the immigrants. Of this, according to the literary critic Per Amdam, Bojer was well aware: 'Han [Bojer] visste at han skrev bedre om utvandrerne enn om innvandrerne.'⁶⁶ Bojer's ambitious plan to write a definitive work about Norwegian-Americans has been criticised for its lack of insight and depth, and for its concentration on the 'typical'. However, this 'typical' has confirmed the widely-held view on the experience of immigration, and made the novel popular in both Norway and America.⁶⁷

Push and Pull Factors as Characters

The various motivations for emigration in Bojer's novel tend to be of a practical nature. The narrator skips over the period of contemplation, when expectations and fears form the picture of the new land, and the descriptions of the objective incentives or circumstances that result in emigration are immediately followed by the emigrants' departure.

The cast of characters represents a catalogue of push and pull factors. These factors were, in the case of Ola and Else, the farmhand and the colonel's daughter, the rigid class system that did not allow them to marry. This social push-factor is backed by an opposite pull-factor: Ola believes that in America his social standing would improve. He is also adventurous, and wants to see the world and experience its variety. Thus Ola's character alone incorporates three common reasons for emigration. Morten Kvidal is motivated by the widespread notion that money is easy

to obtain in America, and he plans to earn enough and return to Norway. He is strongly attached to the family farm, Kvidal, especially since his father paid for it with his life, after purchasing it in an attempt to raise himself from the status of a simple cotter. Something in Morten, though, indicates that he belongs to the New World, too – his dreams of expansion and improvement are typical of the American mentality. He is aware that ‘træler bør ikke drømme om å bli herremenn’⁶⁸ in Norway, and it is no coincidence that in America Morten, who had no plans to stay, gradually emerges as the leader of the settlement. Woven into his character is also a romantic motif, similar to Else and Ola’s. He is in love with the sexton’s daughter Helena, whose family regards him as an unsuitable match. The teacher Jo Berg views America from an ideological point of view. As a freethinker he feels persecuted in Norway.

When Erik Foss, previously of the poorest in the community, and now a wealthy and respected man, recounts that in America there is not only free and fertile land, but also social equality, it appears to be the only viable option for Morten, Ola, Else, and Jo. They are joined by Per Føll, who rebels against the social injustice in the Old World, and believes that ‘i Amerika får du seks hundre mål for ingenting. Der er det ingen standsforskjell, ingen skatt, ingen eksis, og der kan du tru ka du vil, der er ingen statskirke.’ (27) Ironically, once Per achieves the freedom he longed for he becomes the most conservative and patriotic of the settlers. Anne who is pregnant by a man who will not marry her – again, because of her inferior social position – accompanies Per. Anton Noreng, the sexton’s listless son, is sent to America in the hope that something will come out of him, but he is a minor character whose fate is not discussed in detail. On the other hand, Kal Skaret, his wife Karen and their four children, although the poorest among the collective of emigrants, are central to the novel. Theirs is a purely economic emigration. Unlike all the other characters they are going *towards* something and not *away* from it, and in a somewhat simplistic rendition of the American myth they become the most prosperous of the immigrants, and those who seem to suffer least from homesickness, which incidentally was Bojer’s thematic point of departure in *Vor egen stamme*.⁶⁹ Nonetheless, as Flatin observes, Bojer has, perhaps unconsciously, hit upon a deeper truth with his

descriptions of the way in which immigrants like Kal Skaret absorb American values, and ‘den stadige økning av jord og eiendom blir til en besettelse. Resignasjonen, eller defeatismen, som preget hans liv i hjemlandet blir erstattet med umettelig trang til materiell suksess.’⁷⁰ The fact that most literary immigrants are portrayed as unhappy, or, at best, as torn between the homeland and America, suggests that their obsession with acquiring more land is an attempt to come to terms with the loss of the vertical dimension in their lives – their history and traditions. Whereas striking roots takes time, spreading laterally is easy where land is cheap. Not surprisingly, from a European perspective – and specifically from the perspective of those writing ‘national’ literatures – the notion that breadth can compensate for depth is an absurd fallacy. Kal and Karen succeed *because* they are simple-minded, not in spite of it. A more positive interpretation would be that Kal is the one who makes the most of the opportunities America presents him with, because he is the one who stands to lose least by leaving the homeland. Since he realises his potential, his achievement must be regarded as more than merely a material achievement, it is social and psychological as well. After all, he gets a chance to use his talents and skills, which the homeland seemingly had no need for, but he never forgets that he was a poor cotter in Norway - *i.e.* his well-earned prosperity does not corrupt him.

Meeting a New Landscape

In *Topographies* (1995), J. Hillis Miller writes: ‘the landscape in a novel is not just an indifferent background within which the action takes place. The landscape is an essential determinant of that action. No account of a novel would be complete without a careful interpretation of the function of landscape (or cityscape) within it.’ But, he continues,

‘novels do not simply ground themselves on landscapes that are already there, made by prior activities of building, dwelling and thinking. The writing of a novel, and the reading of it, participate in those activities. Novels themselves aid in making the landscapes that they apparently presuppose as already made and finished. [...] This making is, however, ambiguous. It is both a making and a discovering.’⁷¹

However, in *Vor egen stamme*, although largely set in America and rich in descriptions of particular place features and phenomena, there does not seem to be

any real interest in the New World. This is perhaps Bojer's greatest weakness – he neither makes nor discovers a landscape, as one would expect in a novel whose main preoccupation is in fact with a new place. As noted in the opening of this chapter, this attitude is typical of the emigrant novel, which, to a certain degree, manifests a lack of interest in other places. Instead the prairie is a somewhat conventionalised backdrop that allows the reader to become acquainted with characters that are themselves personifications of a greater social and historical phenomenon. Observations on the new place are expressed through frequent comparisons between the Dakota prairie and the Norwegian fjord landscape. In fact it seems that America only exists as a contrast to Norway, for although it is full of potential, most of the characters can only perceive it through their loss of beloved landscapes: 'Aldri har de kunnet tenke seg jorda så stor og himmelen så endelaus vid. [...] Fans her enda et tre, en bakke, men det er ingenting, uten dette havet av jord, som i tunge, sugende dønninger toner ut, blåner lengre og lengre bort, til den siste bølgen langer ut etter sjølve himmelen.' (55) From the immigrants' point of view this double perspective is the only means of apprehending the new place. One does, however, wonder whether Bojer, himself not familiar with America, chose to minimise their interest in their new surroundings even further.

Familiar with the rhetoric of Norwegian immigration, Theodore Blegen writes: 'To many a Middle Western Norwegian-American farmer the prairie was an ocean, the covered wagon a vessel, the entire scene reminiscent of sailors and ships and sky-rimmed sea.'⁷² Tempting as it is to attribute this metaphor exclusively to seafaring Norwegians, Quantic confirms that the ocean is one of the most common metaphors for the prairie. 'It is a rare plains writer who does not invoke the image of the sea of grass', she writes, and asks,

'Why this recurring comparison? One obvious factor is the space itself [...] while the initial perception of a landscape is a simple visual act, it is often followed by a complex of reactions, including the remembrance of previously seen landscapes. The undulating, palpable emptiness and the absence of landmarks force observers to describe the vast spaces before them in the only terms they know.'⁷³

Aware of the inevitability of this perception strategy Bojer employs the ocean/prairie metaphor, and at the same time turns the attention back to the homeland. The focus

shifts backwards rather than forwards to make up for the characters' inability to grasp the massive picture of the prairie. It lacks familiar features that they in vain try to introduce into it:

'Sola senker si brennende kule ned mot præriehavet og farger ansiktene deres raue. Det er som de nå for alvor stirrer etter fjella, fjordene, skogene, de blide sjøene og grønne bakkene i heimlandet. De kan stirre og stirre, men av prærien dukker de ikke fram. Det bildet av heimlandet, som ennå er så levende i dem, tørner mot denne ødslige sletta og gjør dem enda mer svimmel.' (56)

The ambivalence in Bojer's descriptions of the prairie lies in his emphasis on emptiness, in the prairie's capability to absorb the meaning poured into it. It is a kind of *tablua rasa* which only few of his characters, and most notably Kal Skaret, manage to draw a pleasing picture on. This emptiness, perceived as infinity, is ambiguous in itself, because it represents both death and regeneration. It may acquire a certain ethereal quality since the earth and the sky are inseparable, but Bojer presents America as a place that can only be perceived through the five senses, *i.e.* it has no spiritual properties. It can, however, with time, acquire significance. After Erik Foss, the leader figure, dies, the immigrants are left alone on the prairie in mid-winter. Despite the difficulties, his death marks a turning point in their relationship with the land. They become more independent and take control of their own fate. His burial site becomes their churchyard, and through death they are confronted with the reality of their presence on this land, opening a dialogue with its vertical as well as its horizontal dimension. But can it become a real home for people whose immediate material needs have been satisfied? This seems possible only by reconstructing the old home in a new, wider environment:

'Det er som den jorda de har brutt opp, likevel fester dem til stedet, gjør det mer trivelig. [...] Sol og regn blir deres forsyn, åkrene deres heim. Og alt nå kaller de opp de gårdene de kom fra i gamlelandet. Navnene Skaret, Foss, Vatne og Berg, Noreng og Kvidal fester seg til jordlottene og hyttene her ute. [...] Navnene blir en vigsel over hyttene og reiser ei luftspeiling av heimen deres i det gamle landet.' (74)

Whereas most of his friends, with the passage of time, become part of this mirage – thus turning it into a reality – Morten never learns to live with it. He is torn between his desire to return to the original Kvidal, and his growing attachment to the new

Kvidal. He is an integral part of the two landscapes, but rather than feeling at home in both, he is homeless no matter where he chooses to live. He has something of Hamsun's restless Edevart Andreasson in him, and like him he travels back and forth between Norway and America. While most fictional immigrants sooner or later substitute the longed-for place in the west with the one in the east, Morten realises that the longed-for place is a shape-shifting affliction, which, instead of providing comfort, makes life a misery:

'Kom hit, og du må ut igjen, reis, og du lenges atter hit. Hvor du så er, vil du kjenne det kalle fra fedrenes landskap, en lurlokk inne fra djupe åser. Du har heimen ute og heimen her, i grunnen blir du fremmed på begge steder. Ditt egentlige tilhold blir fjernsynet mot det som er langt borte, og ditt sinn blir som bølgen, alltid uro, alltid på reise.' (245)

Personal Pain – Collective Achievement

In 1924 mass-emigration from Norway was in the process of becoming history, following a last peak around 1920. Preparations for the 100th anniversary of the 1825 Quaker emigration were underway, and both Bojer and Rølvaag planned the publication of their novels to coincide with this event. *Vor egen stamme* can be read as a historical assessment of the recent past. As in most historical assessments, the individual is portrayed only inasmuch as he or she represents the collective. From the narrator's point of view, Morten's pain is also his great source of strength. It enables him to achieve much more than he would have done had he stayed at home. This reflects Bojer's approach to emigration in general; it is an epic 'større enn både Snorre og Homer', as Jo the teacher says (164), and if one overlooks the price paid by the individual immigrant, the picture emerging is one of triumph. The immigrants may have felt compelled to leave the Old World, but the New has brought out the best in them, as predicted by one of the passengers on the ship carrying them across the Atlantic: 'Vi nærer oss hjemme på utvé, og når vi vel og vakkert er der over, da utretter vi ofte store ting på vår hjemvé.' (49)⁷⁴

Since Bojer interprets immigration as a national venture – the 'vi' in the above quote is not incidental – his choice of imagery naturally draws upon Norse history, with very few references to biblical stories. When the narrative acquires biblical

dimensions it is often in conjunction with descriptions of hardships and catastrophes, reminiscent of the punishment brought upon Egypt in the *Exodus* account. Grasshoppers, hailstorms and droughts, prairie fires, mental illness and menacing Indians are all part of the trials the immigrants must endure. There is no room for images like Eden or the Promised Land, because if anything, America resembles Egypt (symbol of slavery) more than Canaan. The success of the immigrants is attributed first and foremost to their robustness of body and mind, and not to the receiving country. The decision to minimise biblical references could also be linked to the general secular tone of the book, dealing as it does mostly with the practical aspects of emigration. It could however be that Bojer wished to emphasise the historical Scandinavian link with successful colonisation ventures, and in particular the Scandinavian link with America, starting with Leif Erikson (223). Twice in the text the Norwegian settlement on the prairie is referred to as 'Det nye Normandiet' (223 and 240). This image is significant on the socio-historical level, because the Viking settlement in Normandy is characterised by *assimilation*, whereas many Scandinavian immigrants in America showed clear segregationist tendencies. This may be an implied criticism of Norwegian-Americans, but could also simply be an indication that the image has not been thought through. It is, however, a rather unique comparison, and one that strengthens the impression that Bojer is more concerned with what the immigrants bring to America than with what they find there.

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Based on the observations made on pp. 77-81 above, *Vor egen stamme* emerges as a typical emigrant novel, conveying the view that on the personal level immigration is a tragic experience, dominated by a sense of homelessness and longing back. While Bojer opted for a more fixed national viewpoint – his entire narrative is written from a Norwegian perspective while America remains an almost insignificant setting – Morten moves from the one-dimensional life on the Trøndelag farm to the double perspective of the Norwegian-American. Indeed Morten epitomises this double perspective which dictates a constant comparison with the homeland. Attachment to the homeland is expressed through detailed and positive descriptions of the native landscape, and although the bulk of the novel is set in America, its landscape is and remains 'foreign'. Since it is perceived as menacing or meaningless, empty, also its

description is characterised by a lack of interest. This is not a judgement on Bojer's ability to depict a landscape convincingly, but support for the claim that for a writer of 'national' fiction the New World is an abstract place that only functions in relation to the national landscape. The lack of interest manifested in the description of the foreign setting relates to the emigrant novel's basic assumption that it is not one's native landscape the emigrant forsakes, but the temporal economic and social circumstances that mar it. In the national-romantic rhetoric, however, the natural beauty of the homeland transcends the petty details of human life. Hence aesthetic attachment to the homeland, even from afar, is an expression of a sound patriotic sentiment. Since immigration is described as a national venture, Bojer's references to the Norse past are both relevant and effective, even if not entirely accurate. *Vor egen stamme* is structured around Norwegian values and concepts, and appeals to the Norwegian national sentiment. Written in the language of the immigrants' country of origin, and intended mainly for readers in that country, it makes a greater contribution to the national mythology than to the exploration of new territories and the understanding of other places.

On one point, though, *Vor egen stamme* marks a deviation from the emigrant novel's usual pattern. While many authors employ biblical imagery to convey their characters' thoughts and aspirations, if not their own assessment of the scale and significance of the venture, Bojer, like Holt, chose to concentrate on secular national imagery. It may however be claimed that although the specific images themselves are absent, the atmosphere surrounding the plot is 'biblical', and is perceived as such. Alternatively it may be suggested that the convention of using biblical imagery in emigration descriptions is not always as effective as the use of national imagery. Bojer's exclusion of biblical imagery implies that it is not necessarily an essential element of the emigration narrative, and may simply function as a decorative layer that neither adds to nor subtracts from a text, providing it has a strong (secular) ideological basis.

7. THE IMMIGRANT'S PERSPECTIVE: TRAGEDY OR BLISS?

Scandinavian-American Writers

It may be argued that Scandinavian-American literature, particularly that written in a Scandinavian language, forms an integral part of Scandinavian literature, and should be approached accordingly. Others choose to view it as part of American literature, or to classify it in a separate Scandinavian-American category. In *The Divided Heart*, Skårdal uses the creative output of the immigrants to write the history of immigration, thereby indirectly cataloguing their work as a distinct literary form. Orm Øverland has more recently published a study of the history of Norwegian-American literature written in Norwegian (*The Western Home*, 1996). Both Skårdal and Øverland confirm that it was the experience of immigration that turned cotters, farmers and craftsmen into poets and novelists. As Øverland notes: 'That so many immigrants should feel called to express themselves in fiction and have their efforts published is an indication of the liberating force of the process of migration.'⁷⁵

Whether rejoicing in their newly-found freedom or overwhelmed by homesickness, most immigrant-writers were not 'professional' authors. While this reservation may be somewhat trivial, a more significant distinction between Scandinavian and Scandinavian-American authors is that of immediacy of experience. Although immigrants' writing is in many ways more authentic, it is in fact the *distance* with which writers observe the phenomenon this study focuses on. Scandinavian authors who treat emigration as a literary theme rather than as an autobiographical element provide a fascinating insight into the way in which national (or ethnic) notions are woven into novels that, on the surface, deal with a different part of the world altogether. While Scandinavian-American literature is ultimately concerned with creating the unique ethnic and cultural identity of the Scandinavian American,⁷⁶ Swedish and Norwegian novels about emigration, written and published in the Old World, tell us something about the perceptions of those who did not emigrate. In other words, it is the view of those who stayed behind that is more interesting from a Scandinavian perspective, because it is to a large extent they who shape the attitudes of their countrymen and women towards emigration. Authors such as Moberg, Bojer and Lagerlöf are those whom Scandinavian readers rely on for historical or semi-

historical accounts of emigration, and not – for whatever reason this may be – on the writings of those who were themselves immigrants. Rølvaag, however, is a clear exception.

Despite the above reservation it seems necessary to include one or two Scandinavian-American novelists to complete the picture of the literary emigration-immigration process. Due to Rølvaag's importance as a chronicler not just of Norwegian immigration, but also of the general experience of uprooting, a discussion on his tetralogy is presented in the following. The section will conclude with an analysis of a text by the Swedish-American writer Leonard Strömberg.

Ole Edvart Rølvaag

Although he may be classified as a Norwegian-American writer, Rølvaag is regarded as a Norwegian author in his country of birth,⁷⁷ where several of his books, including the four volumes discussed here, were first published. Having emigrated from the northern province of Nordland at the age of twenty, Rølvaag had absorbed authentic Norwegian culture in his formative years, and yet left at an early enough age for memories of his youth to become enshrouded in nostalgic mist. What distinguishes Rølvaag from many writers based in Scandinavia is in fact the nostalgic distance from the culture he is writing about. As an immigrant he has experienced a loss which authors based in the homeland can only warn about, and which is expressed by the strong element of folklore in his work. What other authors may view as an addition of folkloristic colour to their writing, Rølvaag presents as cultural heritage. He is in many ways a representative of the paradoxical in 1880s Norway, a decade in which 'utvandringskullene fra Norge var på det største og den nasjonale bevissthet sterkere enn noensinne.'⁷⁸ Rølvaag's writing can be read as an attempt to reconcile these two conflicting historical phenomena by justifying the former with the latter.

I de dage (1924) starts where many emigrant novels end: it is a novel about settling rather than immigrating. It describes the westward movement by focusing on a small group of Norwegian immigrants (originally from Helgeland), and mainly on one family, consisting of Per Hansa, his wife Beret and their children. The decision to

emigrate and the journey across the Atlantic are only briefly mentioned in the context of Beret's sense of guilt towards her parents, and the novel opens with the group's settlement in the Dakota Territory in 1873. Unlike Bojer's, Rølvaag's Dakota prairie is not relegated to the background, but is a powerful participant in the pioneering drama. However, Rølvaag too uses the 'foreign' setting to highlight what is, from his point of view, the ideal. The struggle to preserve 'Norwegianness' in its original form – the form Rølvaag remembered from his youth – is doomed to failure when its adversary is an all-consuming landscape, although the same landscape can be extremely generous. Despite the fact that the material achievements of the immigrants are an indication of their moral superiority, such achievements are dismissed by Rølvaag – this kind of success is for historians and statisticians to brag about. A smooth transition to a new landscape is meaningless as a literary theme; hence the universal consensus regarding the reading of the four-volume novel as an accurate representation of the tragedy of immigration.

Two parallel conflicts dominate the novel's first volume, and reflect each other. The first between the settlers and the new landscape, the second between the enthusiastic and optimistic Per Hansa and the fearful, fatalistic Beret. As he realises his ambition to be an independent farmer, she perceives her situation as exile, a justified punishment for her sins.⁷⁹ Their two opposite ways of interpreting the new environment and their life in it are constantly contrasted, although Beret's anxiety-ridden experience of the first few months in the settlement, leading up to Christmas and the birth of their fourth child (Peder Seier) is given prominence. Curiously, a superficial reading of the novel's first two volumes, published in English as *Giants in the Earth*, will often result in crowning Per Hansa the novel's, and by implication the author's 'hero'. However, those who persevere through the entire tetralogy will discover that it is Beret Rølvaag is interested in, it is her he holds dear.

Folktales and Fairylands

In Chapter Two we have seen how Rølvaag combined biblical and Norse images in the novel's title to reflect his and his characters' worldviews. But as Einar Haugen notes, Rølvaag's favourite source of imagery was Norwegian folktales, and

particularly those about Askeladden,⁸⁰ a male Cinderella who fights and destroys trolls⁸¹ and wins the Princess and the Kingdom. Askeladden's achievements are attributed to his courtesy towards the poor and frail, combined with his cunning open-mindedness. Well-known tales like "Soria Moria Slott", "Askeladden som kappåt med trollet" and "Askeladden og de gode hjelperne"⁸² provide a foundation for images throughout the novel. As noted, biblical imagery is often used to convey the thoughts of characters, while Norse images communicate the values of authors. What Rølvaag has achieved with the folktale imagery is a literary unity between his own interests – the preservation of Norwegian popular culture – and that of his characters. Although Per Hansa and Beret's literal interpretation of the folktales, his positive and hers negative, might at times border on the absurd, Rølvaag uses this to demonstrate how deeply rooted the two are in Norwegian culture, or simply, how *Norwegian* they are.

The study of folktales has shown that regardless of distinctive features, many tales appear to have a shared origin, or a central motif so common, that the tale, stripped to its basic structure, may be found in different versions in many parts of the world. And yet, although it is possible that Rølvaag was aware of the universal appeal of the folktale, it seems that he viewed Norwegian folktales as the unique cultural heritage of his people, a product of their landscape and history, which must be preserved. In his view, Americanisation implied a loss of identity, and with his immigrant epic he made his contribution for the survival of Norwegian culture in the United States. Indeed it has been claimed that both Bojer and Rølvaag wrote their novels as a reaction to a wave of pro-assimilation activity in America in the post-war years.⁸³ Thus, *I de dage* and its three sequels may be read as a 'tendensroman', or a programmatic, didactic novel, and not just as a historical or semi-historical account. In fact, whereas the setting of the novel is the 1880s, its ideological agenda relates to the debate of the 1920s, which brings into question the credibility of the narrative.

Rølvaag's huge success with *I de dage*, both in Norway and in the United States, and later internationally, has been attributed to the psychological depth and honesty of the novel, its universal truth. Stylistically, too, it is possible that what Rølvaag

presents as typically Norwegian is interpreted and understood differently by readers from different backgrounds, but with the same effect. This point will be demonstrated with a recurring image from the novel, the Kingdom ('riket'). The typical Askeladden tale, with its Princess and Kingdom to be won, is based, like Per Hansa's visions, on agricultural fantasies – the kingdom being a prosperous farm and the princess the rich farmer's daughter. A Norwegian reader will immediately recognise familiar elements, and be able to place in its appropriate context a sentence like: 'Med han Per Hansa bar det lenger og lenger inn i eventyret, det merkelig rare eventyret, der han var både kongen og prinsen og eide all herligheten selv.'⁸⁴ For other readers, the image of a kingdom might have a religious connotation, although the text provides several indications that Per Hansa is not a religious man. Another reading of the kingdom motif is as a European image (as opposed to specifically Norwegian), part of a long tradition of fairytales with kings, princesses and palaces. This tradition reflects an undemocratic (not to say unjust) social system and links Per Hansa with images of Medieval Europe rather than modern America. The effectiveness of this imagery may be doubtful, but the fact remains, that all three interpretations demonstrate that it is impossible to describe the unknown in unknown terms, and one has to project the familiar on the new. The different concepts of the dreamt-of place are made up of what the characters, and readers, think they 'know' – from biblical stories, fairytales and folklore, but not from personal experience. And yet palaces, cities of gold and lands flowing with milk and honey are no more familiar to the immigrants than the prairie or any aspect of life associated with it.

While the reader may indulge in multi-cultural interpretations, Rølvaag knows that for many immigrants there is only one longed-for place. As the concrete homeland is transformed into a set of beautified memories, it acquires the attributes of a fairyland. In the novel's third volume, *Peder Seier* (1928), this is expressed through Beret's thoughts: 'det var vakkert i Norge. Intet tålte sammenligning med nordlandssommeren, for den var selve eventyret.'⁸⁵ The typical emigrant novel's changing orientation – westward and then eastward – is clearly demonstrated here, although it must be said of Beret that even more so than other fictional female immigrants, she never had a real westward orientation.

The Prairie

As implied by the families' decision to leave Minnesota, their initial attempt to find their Promised Land in America has failed. Whatever expectations they had on leaving Norway, these were not fulfilled, and in *I de dage* they set out on a mini-migration within America. Yet Per Hansa and his two sons, Ole and Store-Hans, do not show any signs of disappointment, and view the move west as a great adventure: 'Umulig var det nå slett ikke at han [Per Hansa] tenkte seg til himmels; for kursen var alltid den samme: de gikk bent på himmelbrynet der vest. [...] Og det bar mot soleglad.' (15) Like Hauge's Cleng Peerson who from early childhood sought to reach the sun (see p. 204 below), the immigrants in *I de dage* follow the sun and move further and further west, to a place previously considered uninhabitable or even non-existent. Perhaps it is for this reason that Beret perceives the landscape in images of death, as her horror of the prairie's monotonous isolation increases: 'Uendeligheten hun satt i, ville gitt fred, var det ikke for stillheten, som her var mer umedgjørilig enn i noen kirke. Og hva skulle vel bryte den i stykker? Her for ikke mennesker; her sang ikke fugl' (36).

With his first-hand knowledge of America, Rølvaag is aware that the continent cannot be presented as one unified mass. America offers an incredible variety of climates and landscapes, despite being perceived as a simplified 'good' or 'bad' country. In *I de dage*, the general America Fever gives way to the more specific 'Western Frontier Fever', although its consequences are just as dramatic:

'vestfeberen begynte å herje settlementene som en farsott. Slikt noe var aldri hendt før; menneskene ble drukne av forvirrede syner; de snakket i ørske: — — — "Reis vest! Reis bare vest, godtfolk! — Jo lenger vest, dess bedre blir landet!" — Folk så febersyner —: uendelige vidder, fruktbare på rikdom, lå der vest og glødet hvor dagen sank om kvelden — et lykkens salige alveland!' (174)

The dream of a fairyland is constantly nourished by life, and it takes more than one disappointment to destroy it. The prairie, however, is a serious rival, and those who cannot thrive on it perceive it in extremely menacing terms. In *The Role of Place in Literature*, Leonard Lutwack gives examples of the traits attributed to various landscape features. On flat places he notes that they are 'safe, restful, reassuring', but

are sometimes perceived as 'uninspiring and dull'. On the other hand, wastelands too are often flat, and these are occasionally associated with catastrophe and death.⁸⁶ Although not a wasteland in the agricultural sense, for Beret the prairie is the end of the world – geographically and mentally, as Quantic observes: 'Beret's conflict represents not only the immigrant's inability to adapt but also the cultural and psychological wasteland of American values'.⁸⁷ When a new group of Norwegian immigrants arrive in the settlement they are convinced to stay even if they had not initially planned to. They are immediately thought of as 'bra folk, utmerkede folk alle sammen' (123), while all other nationalities are at least initially treated with suspicion and seen as a threat, whether they are Irish, German or Indians. Clearly if the landscape is perceived as hostile the only solution is to make it more familiar by implanting in it familiar ethnic and cultural features.

The Kingdom

The title of *I de dage's* sequel, *Riket grunnlegges* (1925), indicates the narrator's ironic evaluation of Per Hansa's efforts to establish his kingdom. Although he makes progress on the material level, Beret's fears of spiritual decay are confirmed. The price the land exacts for its generosity seems unbearable, and the volume ends with the tragic death of two of the settlements' hardest pioneers – Hans Olsa and Per Hansa. The underlying theme in *Riket grunnlegges* continues to be the battle between man and the forces of nature. To win this battle the settlers must dedicate their lives to hard work and practical matters. They neglect their spirituality and lose touch with traditional psychological strategies for dealing with hardship. As a result, their ability to withstand emotional strain is reduced, as is the case with Hans Olsa, who dies in great anguish and fear for his soul.

While the first half of the volume builds up expectations towards the realisation of Per Hansa's dreams, from chapter x, in the section aptly titled 'Ondskapens hær under himlene' and onwards, his half-fulfilled dreams become delusions. When swarms of grasshoppers prey on the fields, the sun, previously a symbol of the promise of the West, becomes a symbol of the deceitful and the destructive: 'Og alltid kom trollskapen fra vest og nordvest, helst fra nordvest der solgløden var som

aller fagrest'.⁸⁸ (The 'trollskap' referred to are the grasshoppers) The apparent success in earthly matters – for those pioneers whose spirit is not broken by grasshoppers, droughts and harsh winters – is juxtaposed with the great religious emptiness, which serves as a warning of the troubles ahead. Beret's nervous breakdown, expressed among other things in her longing for a stricter religious life in the settlement, is occasionally understood to be a *normal* human reaction to a *mad* landscape. Although the conflict with the country's native inhabitants costs the lives of many, 'disse trengslene var alikevel små mot den tyngsel Storvidda kastet over enkelte sinn. Den la mange i selvmorderens grav og fylte asyl etter asyl med forhutlede, fjollete vesener som engang hadde vært mennesker.' (319)⁸⁹

In order to give some meaning to their isolated life on the prairie, a visiting Norwegian priest compares the settlers to the Israelites, using images the immigrants themselves were likely to use: 'presten [...] anvendte billedet på dem som stod foran ham: De òg var vandret inn i Kanaans land. Fra slektens eldgamle bo hadde de dratt ut, langt over hav til fremmed land. Her skulle de nå feste rot på nytt, og ættene deres vokse i uoverskuelig tid' (281). The comparison allows the settlers to sense the religious and historical importance of their mission. They form part of a cycle of events and can therefore predict the outcome of their venture. Significantly, due to the scale of the project, the individual is no longer important. The colonisation of the Western Frontier is described as a massive wave that drowns those who stand in its way, although its destructiveness is translated into pure energy:

'Folk kastet seg blindt ut i det umulige og gjorde utrolige ting. Segnet noen – og det hendte ofte – kom det ofte andre og tok fatt. Slekten var blitt ung igjen. Det utrolige lå i luften, folk søp det i seg og gikk der drukne, kastet seg bort og lo av det. Selvfølgelig gikk det an, – *alt* gikk an her; det fantes ikke noe umulig mer! – Et slikt overmål på tro og selvtillit har ikke menneskene hatt hverken før eller senere i historisk tid.' (320)

Here Rølvaag distances himself from trite biblical imagery. The settlers are not re-enacting events but are creating them. The sense of newness is so overwhelming that it does not tolerate any comparison with the past. It also means that 'old' criteria – whether biblical or European – are not applicable for measuring the success of this venture. However, as the next two volumes of the tetralogy show, it becomes more

and more difficult to prevent the 'old' from spoiling the 'new'. The character who will lead this battle is Peder, Per Hansa's youngest son. As a representative of those few who hang on to a vision – however abstract this may be, and indeed, regardless of how different it is from the narrator's – his role in the novel becomes crucial.

Unimaginable hardship and calamities on an apocalyptic scale characterise life in the settlement during its formative (or 'mythological') years, and although the strongest of the settlers survive them, the text's handling of the issue of settlement on the Western Frontier is quite ambiguous. Is it right in the eyes of God to attempt to cultivate the previously untouched soil? Are not the trials the settlers must endure proof of God's wrath, or are they simply endurance tests in a Darwinian world that must rid itself of the weak? These questions, which many of the settlers must have asked themselves, demonstrate how shaky the religious foundations of immigration become once reality fails to provide justification for this act. The notion of the Promised Land cannot survive the test of actuality, and from a certain point onwards, what the characters struggle for is not the realisation of a vision but a balance between their aspirations and the reality of their surroundings. It is therefore not surprising that many fictional immigrants think in biblical, or in the case of Per Hansa in the first volume, folkloristic, images of greatness and abundance to begin with, but gradually their thoughts move in a more mundane direction.⁹⁰ In *Riket grunnlegges* one sees how this acceptance of reality by some, or resignation by others, allows the settlement to develop into a stable community that focuses on the needs of its members rather than their dreams. The organising of a school marks the beginning of that process, and a sense of community, lost in the first stages of pioneering, has been regained, and could, in theory if not in practice, ease the immigrants' homesickness.

For Beret, however, any compromise with the new environment is a defeat. The conflict between her worldview and that of her husband's will dominate their relationship until his death. While her great enemies are change in general and 'Americanisation' of any form, he, as noted earlier, sees his life in America as an adventure (or fairytale), totally disconnected from his previous life in Norway, and

demonstrated by the fact that he is a fisherman turned farmer. In several novels, hardship and death create a sad bond between the immigrants and their new country (as in *Cleng Peerson og Nils med luggen* or in *Vor egen stamme*). However, Per Hansa's death does not change Beret's determination to maintain the Norwegian nature of the settlement, to ignore, as much as possible, the geographical facts of her situation. This becomes a source of conflict with her children who are Americans, either by birth or by mentality.

Pioneers and Post-Pioneers

The third volume of Rølvaag's tetralogy, *Peder Seier*, has as its protagonist Peder who is born in America and sees himself as an American. Nonetheless his search for identity is marked entirely by the fact that he is the son of immigrants. His Norwegian roots are both the source of his strength – giving him an ethnic awareness, a physique and a moral foundation – but they are also the chains from which he wishes to break free. Significantly, the volume opens soon after the death of both Hans Olsa and Per Hansa, the two seemingly omnipotent pioneers. They are overcome not by old age or hard work, but by the ferocious powers of nature and the disease they bring. As a child Peder associates nature with God, and therefore comes to think of God as 'et ondt vesen' (356). Here lies the key to Peder's unique and sceptical character. He dedicates his life to ridding the New World of this evil in a struggle that gradually takes the superficial form of an ethnic struggle between Irish and Norwegian – between Catholicism and Protestantism – but which is in fact a struggle between fear and self-fulfilment, between superstition and enlightenment.

Peder's cultural identity is confused because he grows up in a Norwegian-speaking home and lives in an isolated immigrant community, and yet he is aware that it is not the homeland. Also the landscape that surrounds him is a source of confusion. The flatness and the wide-open skies above the prairie render it with a shape-shifting quality, a place for mirages. The old immigrants seek their homeland and their past in it, while Peder sees its immense potential, the future. Influenced by what he learns at school, where great emphasis is placed on the unifying effect of the great and wealthy continent, Peder becomes more and more attached to the new land, which

demands that immigrants and their children give up the external features of their old selves – their language and their self-imposed ethnic segregation. Rølvaag criticises this pressure to assimilate. In his opinion it is too strong to resist, and inevitably leads to an identity crisis, or a loss of identity altogether. While Peder develops a liking for the English language and a friendship with an Irish boy, his mother Beret becomes more fanatic in her attempts to preserve all that is Norwegian, be it language, names, religious and social practices or the various aspects of material culture. She perceives Peder's preference for English as blasphemy, assimilation as the downfall and annihilation of a people. Although she comforts herself with the thought that assimilation could function as a 'fertiliser' for the American nation as a whole, this image is still an image of death. Since Peder grows up believing he can incorporate all that is good about Norway *and* America, he will gradually develop a vision of secular spirituality – a life without fear of God, but nonetheless filled with meaning. Through Peder, Rølvaag is attempting to 'transfer' a vision to the next generation – the generation that is usually portrayed as materialistic and lacking in ideals, often cynical. And yet, although a positive and innocent vision at this stage, the discerning reader will have noted Rølvaag's scepticism towards Per Hansa's visions earlier on. A tragedy in its own right, Per Hansa's death is also a foreboding, a prefiguration of the death of all visions in the American wilderness.

By rejecting what seemed to be his natural calling to be a priest, Peder takes the first step towards creating his secular American identity. When he falls in love with Susie Doheny it seems that he is about to fulfil his dream: love wins over the narrow-mindedness of the two communities, and Beret accepts that her son's happiness is as important as maintaining ethnic divisions, although she does so reluctantly. But even if the environment grinds its teeth and learns to accept this 'unnatural' pairing, the inner struggle between the superstitious and frightened Susie and the rational and defiant Peder – essentially a struggle between the Old and the New – has just begun. Ironically, although Peder tries to break down ethnic barriers by arguing for an 'American' identity, freed from European prejudices, Rølvaag resorts to stereotypic characterisation in his attempt to highlight the differences between Irish and Norwegian. This becomes even more apparent in the tetralogy's last volume, but

already here we see how Peder is drawn from his pious, subdued and cleanly environment into the temperamental and chaotic milieu of the red-haired Irish.

Shattered Dreams

In the fourth volume, *Den signede dag* (1931), Peder emerges as an aspiring politician. His choice of a mundane occupation is linked to his vision of America as a purified New World, free from the dark shadows of religion and the destructive role it played in European history. But already the opening lines of the volume echo a biblical catastrophe, as the settlers experience a long period of drought that threatens the continuity of human presence on the prairie, serving as a foreboding in what might otherwise appear to be an optimistic text.

The pioneer generation moves to the background when Peder and his peers come of age and start shaping the present and the future according to their ideals. Peder is mostly preoccupied with the here and now: 'Når du er kommet til verden,' he says to one of his neighbours, 'er det vel fordi du skal være her? [...] Det er til jorden vi er kommet, her er vi, er det så ikke her vi har ansvaret? Og sannelig, her er nok å gjøre!'⁹¹ At the same time, as he faces growing difficulties in the form of ethnic divisions and prejudices – even his own brother accuses him of bringing shame upon the family by marrying a Catholic – Peder develops a fantasy about going away – possibly even back to the Old Country, which he has never seen. The image he has of Norway is linked to his infatuation with Nikoline, a visitor from Nordland who is determined to return to Norway, having seen 'Paradise' (America) and finding it 'Både vakkert å forferdele' (821).

The closing chapters of the novel are characterised by the deterioration in Peder's relationship with Susie, caused almost entirely by their ethnic and religious differences. Peder's revulsion with Catholicism and the terror with which it controls people's lives turns him into an iconoclast – in the literal sense of the word – when he smashes Susie's crucifix, an action which leads to Susie's departure, taking with her their son Pete (Peder after his Norwegian grandfather, Padriac after his Irish great-grandfather). The breakdown of the marriage is a clear indication of the failure

of the melting pot. Instead of creating a new society, the immigrants entrench themselves in their old traditions. As noted, Rølvaag systematically presents the Irish as superstitious, hot-tempered and dirty, while the Norwegians are, without exception, excessively clean and tidy. The image of filth and purity, although used concretely here, is automatically linked to a dangerous preoccupation with racial hierarchy. One could argue that Rølvaag, although himself an American citizen, is writing Old World literature, characterised by a value system that presents the (specific) national or ethnic as the ideal, and trivialises or even demonises the 'other'.⁹²

Den signede dag expresses, like many emigrant novels, a longing for spirituality, occasionally understood as 'culture'; it is filled with awe of the new landscape, and disappointment at its eroding effect on those who subdue it. Rølvaag rejects any suggestion that America may have a positive influence, and even its most celebrated ideal, freedom, is claimed to be a Scandinavian import. A Norwegian priest, in an attempt to boost the confidence of his fellow-countrymen, explains that the Puritans were descendants of the Vikings who sowed the seed of liberty in England, and then carried it to the New World: 'Det er uomtvistelig sannhet at ikke noe sted på jord har individualitets- og frihetstrangen glødet sterkere enn borte i de skandinaviske land' (748). Individualism and freedom may be Scandinavian ideals, but the pioneer generation has never fully enjoyed them, enslaved as it was to securing its survival. Whichever way one looks at immigration in Rølvaag's work, one sees only its negative consequences, although, ironically, the 'kingdom' that Peder's father has dreamt of is flourishing. His wife and children have become well-to-do farmers who have realised the opportunities America presented them with. But this is a purely materialistic kingdom that has been emptied of all the values that nurtured the fairytale kingdom of his dreams.

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Time and again critics have focused on the tragic in Rølvaag's writing. Kristoffer F. Paulson writes in "Rølvaag as Prophet: The Tragedy of Americanization":

'Rølvaag's novels [...] concentrate on the tragedy of Americanization, the cost in lives, in souls, in culture and heritage. Peder rejects his heritage and loses his soul,

coming to judgement empty of his racial culture and his spiritual heritage, belonging neither to the past nor to the present. He is excluded from the future he has dreamed and mapped out for himself and Susie. He exists in a spiritual and cultural desert, and, in fact, is the desert himself.'⁹³

While there is no denying that the novel's inner logic convincingly leads to inevitable tragedy, one suspects that Beret and Peder, despite being authentic and credible representatives of their respective generations, are at the same time somewhat flattened characters, products of a literary convention that perceives immigration as tragic because this convention rejects material values. This anti-materialistic bias which, sadly, does not always accurately reflect true human motivations, is supported by Rølvaag's Norwegian bias which asserts that people must not be separated from their native landscape, and that traditional culture is the only available source of identity.

The Uplifting Power of Immigration

The little known Swedish-American writer Oscar Leonard Strömberg grew up in a working-class environment, became a Methodist priest and emigrated to the United States in 1895.⁹⁴ He wrote for a Scandinavian audience and was, like Rølvaag, first published in his country of birth. His novel *När prärien blommar* (1933) is included in this discussion as an antithesis to Rølvaag's gloomy rendering of the immigrant experience.

Although rich in dramatic events – violent snowstorms, horse thieves, abduction, suicide and murder – the novel is as monotonous as the prairie in which it is set. It has been said of Strömberg's work that it shows 'en starkt religiöst-moraliserande och nykteristisk tendens, som ofta åsidosätter estetisk smak och psykologisk trovärdighet.'⁹⁵ It is therefore not for its literary merits that this book is interesting. It may be badly written, but perhaps precisely for this reason, a striking feature in it is the lightness with which the issue of emigration is dealt. The decision to emigrate is presented as a matter of course, and poses no real dilemma for the characters. They seem oblivious to the threat of being uprooted, and show no signs of physical or emotional attachment to their homeland, although this changes slightly towards the novel's happy end. On the other hand, this lack of depth is perhaps a realistic

portrayal of a period when emigration was an obvious step to take, and a serious debate about its advantages and disadvantages seemed unnecessary. Whereas the literary convention established in the novels discussed thus far demands that characters be weighed down, even crushed, by the necessity to emigrate, or by the experience of immigration itself, it could in fact be that Strömberg's account is in some ways more true to life. Referring specifically to Bojer's *Vor egen stamme*, Skårdal raised the interesting point, that while Scandinavian writers attribute fictional emigrants with guilt feelings about leaving the homeland, Scandinavian-American writers, themselves immigrants, rarely express more than a pang of guilt.⁹⁶ *När prärien blommar* is certainly devoid of clichés about homesickness, although abundant in other kinds of clichés.

The only noteworthy push-factor mentioned in *När prärien blommar* is Tilda's broken heart, when Johan Högdal, the book's villain, leaves her to marry her sister Lovisa. America as a symbol of hope ('framtidlandet, sagolandet')⁹⁷ has always been present in the humble home in which she grew up, and Tilda chooses to emigrate in order to escape her misery. The reader does not know much about Tilda to begin with, and might therefore be surprised to find that the girl who so easily gave up on the man she loved, is in fact a very independent and strong-minded woman. Or maybe it is the journey and the meeting with democratic and individualistic America that change her so? She follows the usual immigrant route, from New York to Chicago, where she works for a year, and then west, to the open prairie. Somewhat unusually for a single woman, Tilda stakes out a claim for herself and for her family, who follows her to the New World. From the outset her impressions of the prairie are positive:

'Det var vackert där ute nu, fast det inte fanns ett träd så långt blicken kunde nå. Men de väldiga ödevidderna hade sin egen skönhet, särskilt nu på våren när himlen välvde sig sällsamt klarblå över prärien och vildblommorna började slå ut bland gräsen. Tilda hade en öppen blick för denna skönhet på samma gång som hon gick och drömde om växande träd.' (13)

Although her enthusiasm is not shared by the rest of her family to begin with, they gradually become attached to the open landscape, especially as it begins to change: more ploughed fields, more houses, more roads, and more settlers. Swedes, mainly.

Compared with Sweden, the radically different Nebraska landscape provides challenges that make life worthwhile. It is through hard work that one obtains one's freedom, but this freedom has a religious aspect to it: 'Jag tycker om livet här på vidderna', she says, 'man känner sig fri här ute, fast man också känner sin litenhet.' (27) First and foremost, though, it is the land's incredible fertility that works as a magnet on land-hungry Swedes, and descriptions such as 'den feta, svarta jorden såg utmärkt ut' (26) appear throughout the text. Nonetheless, it is not the raw quality of the soil that preoccupies Strömberg, but what this soil can do to people, and what they can do to it. The novel's moral agenda can be characterised as orthodox Christian, or in secular terms, colonialist. Man is to take possession of the land and transform it. Although the two main characters, Tilda and Viktor, express a certain romantic fascination with the unspoilt landscape, the novel's attitude to nature can be summed up with Tilda's own thoughts: 'Vilken mäktig värld Gud ändå skapat, vilken storhet i dessa ändlösa vidder, vilka möjligheter för människorna att här tränga undan vildmarken och göra den till ett härligt paradis.' (36)

Curiously, the paradise mentioned above (it appears as 'lustgård' on p. 156 and again on p. 256) is a rare example of the use of what may be termed 'mythological' imagery in the text. There are no references to the Garden of Eden, the Promised Land, Canaan or the Heavenly Jerusalem. Paradise, as mentioned in the previous chapter, is a general image of perfect harmony and happiness, and can be interpreted as a non-religious symbol. This is made even more apparent in the closing lines of the novel, after Tilda gives birth to a son. Like Nilsson-Tannér's 'Nya Eden', Tilda's paradise is also a personal one; it is a subjective place almost devoid of spiritual connotations, for although it is expressed through conventional religious imagery ('wilderness', 'paradise') it refers to the state of being a content, and wealthy, wife and mother: 'Ödemark var det [...], gränslös ödemark. Nu var det som en blommande lustgård, ett paradis.' (256) This lack of Christian imagery is surprising considering the novel's otherwise strong Christian message. Perhaps it is precisely this religious ideology that prevented the author from using imagery that may be regarded as inappropriate. Although unconvincing in its saccharine sweetness and its improbable

solutions to problems, *När prärien blommar* may again show itself to be more realistic than many other novels of its kind: 'real' immigrants never seriously thought of America in biblical terms, no matter how high their expectations were. However, in emigrant novels biblical imagery gained a central role because it was the one source that all – fictional characters, writers and readers – could relate to.

När prärien blommar makes the shift from destitution to prosperity seem a relatively easy one. All it takes is the right amount of trials and tribulations, and first and foremost – a strong Christian character. Tilda might be robust and independent, but her role in a traditional novel such as this is not complete until she is happily married, exchanging her role as a farmer with that of a wife and mother. Rølvaag's Beret and Strömberg's Tilda are rather unusual characters in a genre dominated by male pioneers. But whereas Beret's fate imposes upon her strength and independence, which she does not enjoy, in fact her traditional outlook on life makes her doubt the value of such achievements, Tilda willingly surrenders her strength and independence to their rightful owner on the prairie – the man.

As mentioned, the novel's characters demonstrate a surprising lack of attachment to Sweden. The occasional comparison comes at moments of hardship: did people toil so hard in Sweden?; was winter as harsh in the Old Country?; wasn't life better back home? These complaints, however, never come from either Tilda or Viktor, both emblems of youthful optimism and enterprise. The two express time and time again the belief that there was no future for them in Sweden – in fact for both it is associated with heartache – and that their happiness is linked to the open plains. It is therefore quite surprising to realise that the ideal is based on the Swedish model after all. Tilda and Viktor's wedding ceremony is to be conducted by a Swedish pastor on Midsummer Day, so that, as Viktor says: 'vi kunde [...] ha det lika trevligt som om vi vore hemma i Sverige.' (212) More significantly, the secrecy surrounding Viktor's real identity is lifted when he gives his new-born son his own full name, the aristocratic-sounding Viktor Runesvärd Holmén. That Swedes marry Swedes and live in exclusively Swedish settlements is a matter of course, even for those who are not particularly sentimental about the homeland. What we see here is that despite the

great optimism inspired by the vast prairie, by the *horizontal* dimension, the *vertical*, or 'historical' dimension must be added if the child is to have an identity. Furthermore, the introduction of a class element into a landscape officially defined as egalitarian might, in the context of the romantic love story, add an extra layer of gratification, with a plot that may be summarised as: good-hearted but poor Tilda 'gets' the kind and handsome Viktor (who turns out to be a wealthy man of a good family), but puts into question the characters', and the narrator's, ability to liberate themselves from Old World values and/or prejudices.

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One may again ask why Strömberg chose not to adhere to the literary convention of presenting immigration as a tragic experience. Perhaps emigration was not so difficult; perhaps America was simply an adventure not to be missed out on? As shown so far in this chapter, the concept of the *eventyr/äventyr* is a common way of describing emigration. In both Swedish and Norwegian the word means 'adventure', but whereas the Swedish word can also be translated as 'misadventure' or 'hazardous venture',⁹⁸ the second meaning of the Norwegian word is 'fairytale' or 'folktale'.⁹⁹ To present America as an adventure/fairytale, a generic form of narrative not associated with a specific ideology or location, is a noncommittal way of describing dramatic action.¹⁰⁰ It suggests certain openness towards the outcome of the venture, although it does not necessarily imply that authors are not critical of their characters' decision to emigrate. In other words, it is possible that while authors are often attracted to individuals, wanderers and adventurers, their values are those of the fixed place – the homeland – and of the collective. Hence the occasional ambiguity in the presentation of emigration.

8. LOOKING BACK

Finally, from the vantage point of today's well-integrated although perhaps not fully Americanised descendants of the immigrants, Garrison Keillor, in *Lake Wobegon Days* (1985), gives a flippant account of the lives of those whom writers like Rølvaag and Moberg transformed into semi-mythical heroes. It demonstrates the way in which pioneer narratives have become literary clichés and as such are a target for parody. In a chapter titled "Forebears", Keillor substantiates an important feature of

the emigrant novel: the difficulty in adjusting, and even perceiving, a new kind of landscape. Due to language difficulties, the party of pioneers – the narrator’s ancestors – determined to find a ‘great lake’, finds itself on the Dakota Prairie, after one of its members indicated by gesture that the immigrants are seeking a lake where they could resume their lives as fishermen. However, as his pantomime was understood to indicate a ‘*calm* lake’, it is translated into American terms, and the party is directed to the open prairie. Believing they are on course to their bountiful lake, instead the immigrants find themselves in ‘another country, not only unsettled but unsettling: absolutely flat, unbroken by a tree, flat as a table, straight to the horizon, like a dream, the earth stripped of scenery, of every feature by which one finds his way.’¹⁰¹

Reflecting the universal view of America as a featureless place that has to be filled with European meaning, this little anecdote demonstrates the way in which a landscape with different features is perceived as *featureless*. Needless to say, a native of the prairie might find the Norwegian fjords and deep forests just as overwhelmingly featureless, because although dramatic in themselves, they lack the features by which the man of the prairie finds his bearings.¹⁰² This amusing story also confirms an observation made earlier on the widespread use of the ocean/prairie metaphor. The prairie is a mirage of an ocean, *i.e.* it is *deceitful*, implying a binary opposition in which the prairie is the negative component while the ocean is positive. This dichotomy can also be represented simply as an ‘empty/full’ pair. However, the prairie and the sea *share* symbolic similarities: both have the potential to feed masses (fish and grain), and at the same time both are dangerous and destructive.¹⁰³ The use of the ocean/prairie metaphor could, in the context of Scandinavian national literature, be an indication of the strength and resourcefulness of the characters: famed in the Old World for their shipbuilding and navigation skills, they conquer the prairie just as they had conquered the seas. In contemporary American literature, on the other hand, confusing the prairie with the ocean makes the immigrants look naïve and foolish.

Following the pioneer period, a period which demands that the immigrant give his or her full attention to their immediate surroundings, homesickness starts plaguing the settlers, and seems to get worse the older they get. When the 'old-timers', as the narrator calls them, would talk about home, they meant 'the home in Norway, heavenly Norway.'¹⁰⁴ Although done sarcastically, Keillor verifies what many writers examined in this chapter pointed at in their accounts of immigration, namely the way in which a reversal of concepts occurs within the lifetime of the immigrant. The Promised Land, the longed-for place, becomes the mundane reality, while the homeland, previously a place of harsh reality, if not persecution, becomes the Heavenly Kingdom, or the Lost Paradise.

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By focusing on three core texts, the discussion on the role of the author in shaping attitudes towards emigration, and on the various types of imagery used for this purpose, will continue in the next chapter. Points made thus far will be expanded upon, and new ones will be raised, in an attempt to understand the emigrant novel in relation to the landscape which produced it, as opposed to the landscape it depicts.

¹ W.B. Yeats, *Essays and Introductions*. London: Macmillan & Co. Ltd., 1961, 213.

² Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. Revised Edition, London: Verso, 1991 (1983), 6.

³ Rather than implying that human consciousness was devoid of contents and ready to be occupied by a national awareness, the widely held view is that national thinking filled the gap created by a weakening religious conviction.

⁴ Timothy Brennan, "The national longing for form". In: Homi K. Bhabha (ed.), *Nation and Narration*. London: Routledge, 1990, 48.

⁵ The dominance of the English language and the emergence of post-colonial literature could contribute to making the association of the novel with a particular nation a thing of the past. However, other developments suggest that a distinct language remains one of the clearest criteria for defining political and ethnic units in a world still largely dominated by national thinking.

⁶ Russell King, John Connell and Paul White (eds.), *Writing Across Worlds. Literature and Migration*. London: Routledge, 1995, xiii.

⁷ Ingeborg R. Kongslien, *Draumen om fridom og jord. Ein studie i skandinaviske emigrantromanar*. Oslo: Det Norske Samlaget, 1989, 13.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 37.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ Kjetil A. Flatin, "Historisk roman – emigrantroman. Genrespørsmål i tre norske verk om utvandringen til Amerika". *Edda*, 1977:3, 159.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 160.

¹² Sophus Keith Winther, "Moberg and a new genre for the emigrant novel". *Scandinavian Studies*, No.3, vol. 34, August 1962, 170-182.

¹³ King, Connell and White, xiv.

¹⁴ Ibid., xv.

¹⁵ "Realism", in: J.A. Cuddon, *Penguin Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory*. Third Edition. London: Penguin Books, 1991 (1977), 774.

¹⁶ Moberg and Hauge's works are obvious exceptions, see Chapter Four.

¹⁷ Cuddon, *Penguin Dictionary of Literary Terms...*, 775.

¹⁸ Diane Dufva Quantic, *The Nature of the Place. A Study of Great Plains Fiction*. Lincoln and London: Bison Books, University of Nebraska Press, 1997 (1995), 169.

¹⁹ Aksel Sandemose, *Det svundne er en drøm*. Oslo: Den norske Bokklubben, Aschehoug, 1983 (1946), 116.

²⁰ Dorothy Burton Skårdal, *The Divided Heart. Scandinavian Immigrant Experience through Literary Sources*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1974, 81.

²¹ Kongslien, *Draumen om fridom og jord*, 40.

²² Another possibility, as suggested in Chapter One (p. 23), is that prominent Swedish authors, mainly those who sympathised with the emerging working classes, chose to ignore emigration as a major factor in Swedish society.

²³ This observation is true regarding the established poets of the generation. Popular poetry, mostly in the form of 'viser' (folk ballads or ditties), usually by anonymous writers, discusses the social and economic conditions that necessitate emigration, and often defends those who found themselves forced to emigrate. Jørund Mannsåker, *Emigrasjon og diktning: Utvandringa til Nord-Amerika i norsk skjønnlitteratur*. Oslo: Det Norske Samlaget, 1971, 26.

²⁴ Ibid., 25-27.

²⁵ See Lars Wendelius, *Bilden av Amerika i svensk prosafiktion 1890-1914*. Details in bibliography.

²⁶ Åsfrid Svensen, *Etterord til Fred*. In: Arne Garborg: *Verk*, bind 5. Oslo: H. Aschehoug & co. (W. Nygaard), 1980, 177.

²⁷ Arne Garborg, *Fred*. Oslo: H. Aschehoug & Co. (W. Nygaard), 1973 (1892), 180.

²⁸ Mannsåker, 29.

²⁹ Vidar Sandbeck, *Månen lo over Ravneberget*. Oslo: J.W. Cappelens Forlag, 1979, 6. All subsequent references are to this edition.

³⁰ On proletarianisation see pp. 22-23 above.

³¹ Kristofer Uppdal, *Vandringa. Øl-Kalles ferd*. Kristiania: Aschehoug, 1923, 7. All subsequent references are to this edition.

³² Mannsåker, 62-63.

³³ Despite different ideological agendas, the notion that the earth itself disapproves of emigration is expressed in various novels, for instance by Anders Petter, a representative of the common-sense and humility of the peasant aristocracy, in Elin Wägner's *Åsa-Hanna* (1917): 'jorden, hon tycker inte om att man reser ifrån na. Hon är uthållig själver, men hon vill också, att en ska hålla vid. Tror du, att du kan få nån att sköta gården på ett par år, som känner na och vill na väl som du? Och då ska du se, att om du kommer hem, så är hon blen så avig och främmad, så du känner inte igen varken henne eller djuren.' Elin Wägner, *Åsa-Hanna*. Stockholm: Albert Bonniers Förlag, 1965 (1917), 182.

³⁴ In Vilhelm Moberg, *Berättelser ur min levnad*. Stockholm: Albert Bonniers Förlag, 1968, 292.

³⁵ Vilhelm Moberg, *Soldat med brutet gevär*. Stockholm: P.A. Norstedt & Söners Förlag, 1972 (1944), 251. All subsequent references are to this edition.

³⁶ Paul White, "Geography, Literature and Migration". In: *Writing Across Worlds*, 6.

³⁷ See also Kristina's notions about death in the discussion on Moberg's tetralogy.

³⁸ Knut Hamsun, *Landstrykere*. Oslo: Gyldendal, 1993 (1927), 117. All subsequent references are to this edition.

³⁹ See: Knut Hamsun, *The Cultural Life of Modern America*. Details in bibliography.

⁴⁰ Bjørn Rongen, *Det drar ifra vest*. Oslo: Gyldendal Norsk Forlag, 1939, 16. All subsequent references are to this edition.

⁴¹ Imitating townspeople and Scandinavian Americans, Vetl-Ole, as he is known, changes his name to Ole Olsen when he starts his own business. After his father's death he inherits a deed which grants him ownership of a farm called Bergane. The farm's original owners have emigrated, and Ole changes his name again – this time to enjoy the right to vote, which independent farmers have won, but also in order to have an authentic and local-sounding name.

⁴² Hans E. Kinck, *Emigranter*. Oslo: Aschehoug & Co. (W. Nygaard) 1975 (1904), 183.

- ⁴³ Rolf Nyboe Nettum, "Generasjonen fra 1890-årene". In: Edvard Beyer (red.), *Norges Litteratur Historie*, Bind 4. Oslo: Bokklubben nye bøker, Cappelens Forlag, 1983 (1975), 203.
- ⁴⁴ Alan Swanson, "Där ute: Moberg's predecessors." In: Nils Hasselmo (ed.), *Perspectives on Swedish Immigration*. Chicago, Illinois: The Swedish Pioneer Historical Society. Published in Association with the University of Minnesota, Duluth, 1978, 288.
- ⁴⁵ Per Nilsson-Tannér, *Det nya Eden. Ett svenskt emigrationsäventyr*. Stockholm: Åhlén & Söners Förlag, 1934, 190. All subsequent references are to this edition.
- ⁴⁶ Curiously, a possible exception is Erik Janson himself, who escapes his persecutors by skiing to Norway, and on the way notices the parallels between his fate and that of a certain Swedish king – presumably Gustav Vasa (154). Although one expects Janson to think of himself as a Moses or a Jesus – indeed later in the novel he does claim to be speaking in God's name – it appears that the author believed that Janson who likens himself to a king associated with the triumph of Protestantism in Sweden would convey the character's megalomania just as efficiently.
- ⁴⁷ See Chapter Two for a discussion on the various interpretations and usage of this imagery.
- ⁴⁸ *Psalms 76:2*.
- ⁴⁹ Sam Rönnegård, *Salemsborg. Från emigrationens Sverige och svensk-Amerikas uppkomst*. Stockholm: Evangeliska Fosterlands-Stiftelsens Bokförlag, 1940, 59. All subsequent references are to this edition.
- ⁵⁰ The motif of the 'real' Jerusalem slipping further and further away from those who seek it also appears in Lagerlöf's second volume of *Jerusalem*, in which the dying Birger Larsson refuses to accept that the Jerusalem he arrived at is the 'real' Jerusalem (see pp. 251-52 below). Rönnegård's version is positive, but confirms the idea, that 'Jerusalem' is an expression of longing rather than a concrete place.
- ⁵¹ Sven Delblanc, *Samuels bok*. Stockholm: Bonniers, 1981, 26.
- ⁵² Sven Delblanc, *Kanaans land*. Stockholm: Bonniers, 1984, 7.
- ⁵³ *Ibid.*, 136.
- ⁵⁴ Sven Delblanc, *Maria ensam*. Stockholm: Bonniers, 1985, 7.
- ⁵⁵ *Ibid.* 111.
- ⁵⁶ Harry B. Partin, s.v. "Paradise". In: *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, Vol. 11. New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 188.
- ⁵⁷ See Moberg's descriptions of Indian atrocities in *Sista brevet till Sverige* (1959), 142-158. (Page numbers refer to the 1995 edition.)
- ⁵⁸ Artur Lundkvist, *Utvandring till paradiset*. Stockholm: Albert Bonniers Förlag, 1979, 148.
- ⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 12.
- ⁶⁰ Jon Moe, *Akamai. Sagaen om den norske utvandring til Hawaii*. Oslo: Gyldendal Norsk Forlag, 1975, 15. All subsequent references are to this edition.
- ⁶¹ Eyvind Johnson, *Se dig inte om!* Stockholm: Albert Bonniers Förlag, 1950, (1936), 71. All subsequent references are to this edition.
- ⁶² Kåre Holt, *Cleng Pearson og Nils med luggen*. Oslo: Gyldendal Norsk Forlag, 1948, 62. All subsequent references are to this edition.
- ⁶³ Skårdal, 65.
- ⁶⁴ Despite very few references to dates, this information may be extracted from the text. Kongslien, *Draumen om fridom og jord*, 23.
- ⁶⁵ Per Amdam, "En ny realisme, historie og samtid". In: *Norges litteratur historie*, Bind 4, 364.
- ⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 351.
- ⁶⁷ Flatin, 161.
- ⁶⁸ Johan Bojer, *Vor egen stamme*. Oslo: Gyldendal Norsk Forlag, 1960 (1924), 13. All subsequent references are to this edition.
- ⁶⁹ Philip Houm, *Norsk litteratur efter 1900*. Stockholm: Forum, 1951, 34.
- ⁷⁰ Flatin, 163.
- ⁷¹ J. Hillis Miller, *Topographies*. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1995, 16.
- ⁷² Theodore Blegen, *Norwegian Migration to America*. Vol.II: *The American Transition*. Northfield, Minnesota: The Norwegian-American Historical Association, 1940. 331.
- ⁷³ Quantic, 157.
- ⁷⁴ The man speaking these words is not identified by name, but the clues given in the text suggest that it could be Marcus Thrane, the founder of the Norwegian labour movement. Inserting his character

into the plot might indicate that Bojer, in retrospect, sees America not only as a haven for the hungry, but also as a source of democratic and liberal impulses.

⁷⁵ Orm Øverland, *The Western Home. A Literary History of Norwegian America*. Oslo: The Norwegian American Historical Association, 1996, 111.

⁷⁶ It can also be argued that although written in a Scandinavian language for a Scandinavian readership, Scandinavian-American literature is essentially 'American' in its themes and values. Material success as a reward for hard work is a central motif in the majority of these works.

⁷⁷ The entry on Rølvaag in *Norges Litteraturhistorie* acknowledges the author's contribution in bringing the fate of the immigrant to the awareness of Norwegian as well as international readers, but does not refer to him as an American or a Norwegian-American author. Amdam, 363-366.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 363.

⁷⁹ The tension between the female and the male interpretation of the immigration experience is also the basis for Moberg's study of the relationship between Kristina and Karl Oskar. See Chapter Four.

⁸⁰ Einar Haugen, "O.E. Rølvaag: The Man in His Work". In: Gerald Thorson (ed.), *Ole Rølvaag. Artist and Cultural Leader*. Northfield, Minnesota: St. Olaf College Press, 1975, 22.

⁸¹ Rølvaag used biblical and Norse imagery in the title of his book and in its epigraph respectively. Although the giants are commonly interpreted as the Norwegian settlers who subdued the wilderness, another interpretation suggests that the giants are the raw, sometimes evil, powers of nature that the settlers struggle against (see Chapter Two, p. 64, and note 66 on p. 71). The Norwegian manifestation of such giants are the trolls, hence Per Hansa's role as a troll-slaying Askeladden.

⁸² All appeared in Asbjørnsen and Moe's collection, *Norske Folkeeventyr* in 1843-45.

⁸³ Haugen, "O.E. Rølvaag: The Man in His Work", 15.

⁸⁴ O.E. Rølvaag, *I de dage*. Oslo: Aschehoug [W. Nygaard], 1987 (1924), 87. All subsequent references are to this edition.

⁸⁵ O.E. Rølvaag, *Peder Seier*. Oslo: Aschehoug [W. Nygaard], 1987 (1928), 491-92. All subsequent references are to this edition.

⁸⁶ Leonard Lutwack, *The Role of Place in Literature*. New York: Syracuse University Press, 1984, 40-41.

⁸⁷ Quantic, 114.

⁸⁸ O.E. Rølvaag, *Riket grunnlegges*. Oslo: Aschehoug [W. Nygaard], 1987 (1925), 265. All subsequent references are to this edition.

⁸⁹ This motif also appears in Bojer's *Vor egen stamme*, when Per Føll, mentally fragile because his beautiful and lively wife Anne is a constant source of jealousy, finally gives in to the monotonous landscape, loses his mind and dies in an asylum.

⁹⁰ Although Danish literature has been excluded from this study, many of Rølvaag's observations are echoed in Sophus Keith Winther's *Take All to Nebraska* (1936, first published in English and translated into Danish in 1940 as *Nebraska er mit Hjem*). It is the story of a Danish family's move from Massachusetts to Nebraska in an attempt to find more hospitable land to live on. The Grimsens left the Old World to fulfil the dream of owning vast tracts of fertile land. Since their motivation is of a material nature, their lives as immigrants are also dominated by agricultural success, or in most cases, failure. It is a typical example of the sub-genre: the problems faced by immigrants are largely economic and practical, leaving them little energy to develop a spiritual relationship with their new surroundings, yet creating enough frustrations for them to believe that their 'real' (or spiritual) home will always be in the Old Country.

⁹¹ O.E. Rølvaag, *Den signede dag*. Oslo: Aschehoug [W. Nygaard] 1987 (1931), 628. All subsequent references are to this edition.

⁹² It can however be claimed that ethnic divisions are also maintained in American literature. In Willa Cather's novel *O Pioneers!* most of the characters are born in America but are still identified according to their ethnic origin: Swedes, Bohemians, Germans, French etc. Also character traits are explained on the basis of ethnicity: 'The French and Bohemian boys were spirited and jolly, liked variety, and were as much predisposed to favor anything new as the Scandinavian boys were to reject it. The Norwegian and Swedish lads were much more self-centred, apt to be egotistical and jealous.' Willa Cather, *O Pioneers!* Cambridge, Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Company - The Riverside Press, 1950 (1913), 214.

⁹³ Kristoffer F. Paulson, "Rølvaag as Prophet: The Tragedy of Americanization". In: *Ole Rølvaag. Artist and Cultural Leader*, 59.

⁹⁴ Karl-Åke Kärnell & Louise Vinge (eds.), *Svenskt Litteraturllexikon*. Lund: CWK Gleerup Bokförlag, 1964, 493.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Skårdal, 270.

⁹⁷ Leonard Strömberg, *När prärien blommar*. Tredje upplagan. Falun: Lindblads Bokförlag AB, 1972 (1933), 5. All subsequent references are to this edition.

⁹⁸ *Norstedts Stora svensk-engelska ordbok*. Andra upplagan. Norstedts Förlag, 1993.

⁹⁹ Einar Haugen, *Norsk-engelsk ordbok*. Tredje utgåve. Universitetsforlaget, 1984. In both languages the word also has romantic or erotic connotations, and can be translated as 'romance' or 'love-affair'.

¹⁰⁰ With his use of specific Norwegian folktale imagery Rølvaag's stands out as an exception to this general observation.

¹⁰¹ Garrison Keillor, *Lake Wobegon Days*. London: Faber and Faber, 1987 (1985), 72.

¹⁰² According to Yi-Fu Tuan, sight is the sense human beings, particularly Westerners, consciously depend on most, and consider the most reliable. But different landscapes require different senses. Tuan tells of the Eskimo, who can navigate across vast stretches of Arctic wasteland where occasionally it is impossible to distinguish the sky from the earth. His cues are not necessarily visual – 'he is guided by the direction and smell of winds, and by the feel of ice and snow under his feet'. Yi-Fu Tuan, *Topophilia*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1990 (1974), 77.

¹⁰³ Quantic, 157.

¹⁰⁴ Keillor, 65.

CHAPTER FOUR:

A CLOSER LOOK AT THE EMIGRANT NOVEL

1. THREE CORE TEXTS

In the previous chapter some distinctive features of the emigrant novel have been discussed, along with examples from a variety of texts, some of them emigrant novels, others with a clear emigration motif. The aim was to highlight the similarities and differences in the treatment of the emigration theme in Scandinavian (Norwegian and Swedish) literature. In this chapter three sets of novels, which for the purpose of this study are termed 'core texts', will be analysed: Vilhelm Moberg's Emigrant epic (1949-1959), Alfred Hauge's *Cleang Peerson* trilogy (1961-1965) and Selma Lagerlöf's *Jerusalem* (1901-1902). Their scope, popularity and mainly their authors' probing into the political and psychological, as well as practical aspects of emigration deem them worthy of a longer discussion than that allowed for in the previous chapter. However, as each of these novels merits, and has indeed received, a close examination which is beyond the limits of this study, also in this chapter only those features of the texts that contribute to the understanding of the literary treatment of emigration will be explored, and this in the same manner used in the analysis thus far. Hence particular attention will be paid to themes such as the quality of the soil and the relationship between man and earth in the Old World and the New; the longed-for place; the homeland and the concept of *home*; the national/ethnic viewpoint: emigrants as national heroes, and specifically, the Scandinavian work ethic as an ideological justification for immigration and land seizure. Where relevant differences in the male and female attitudes to emigration will also be pointed out. All three sections will include comments about the narrative technique and the use of biblical imagery.

As in Chapter Three, the order of the texts, as presented above, is not chronological in regard to the date of publication, nor to events depicted. Instead it is an attempt to move from the general to the specific: Moberg's work is in many ways the broadest,

most 'encyclopaedic' emigrant novel, while Hauge's novel concentrates on real historical figures which are nonetheless representative of a larger movement. And closing with Lagerlöf, who focuses on a very particular episode involving a small number of people, without apparent consequences for the nation as a whole. Needless to say Lagerlöf's novel also indicates a shift in the geographical orientation, a shift which will be discussed in detail later on. More importantly, the order of presentation marks a shift from emigration as a central and perhaps only theme, to emigration as twin theme and finally to emigration as one of several themes.

The three texts will be discussed separately, although a certain element of comparison will be built into all sections. Since the three present different attitudes to emigration, the section concluding this chapter will summarise emerging similarities and differences, based on the three-tiered analysis that attempts to isolate the essential components of the emigrant novel. The intention is to demonstrate that although one may classify the emigrant novel as a distinctive sub-genre, reflecting a certain consensus in attitudes to emigration – especially regarding the heroic and by implication national virtues of fictional emigrants – variations, some subtle and others fundamental, do exist. The time the novels were written in and the period they depict is a decisive factor in the treatment of emigration as a literary theme, although here greater emphasis will be placed on the author's ideological and/or religious worldview as such a factor.

2. VILHELM MOBERG AND THE EMIGRANT EPIC

In the autumn of 1997 viewers of "Röda rummet", a literature programme on Swedish television, were asked to vote for 'the Century's Swedish book'. The results, broadcast on May 23, 1998, revealed that Vilhelm Moberg's *Utvandrarna* is the best-loved novel among Swedes today. *Utvandrarna* is the first volume of the emigrant tetralogy, and significantly the only part of it that takes place primarily in Sweden, which might explain the public's attachment to this volume. It may however be assumed that most readers are familiar with the entire tetralogy and do not necessarily view each volume as a separate novel. Its popularity, which already on the publication of the last volume in 1959 prompted comparisons to 'bibel och

psalmbok',¹ was enhanced by a film adaptation by Jan Troell in 1970, starring Liv Ullmann and Max von Sydow, and later by a musical written by ABBA's Benny Andersson and Björn Ulvaeus (*Kristina från Duvemåla*, premiered in 1995). It indicates an increasing interest in and sympathy towards those who felt compelled to leave the country some hundred years earlier. Could this be confirmation of the claim made in the previous chapter, that the emigrant novel, of which Moberg's work is a prime example, is in many ways a 'national' novel that serves the needs of readers in the emigrants' country of origin? This possibility will be examined below.

From a young age Moberg was preoccupied with history, particularly the rural past of his native Småland. In his essay "Romanen om utvandrarromanen" he expresses the view, that mass emigration to America is the greatest event in modern Swedish history, although authors, like writers of history books, have shown little interest in it.² 'Att ämnet inte lockade tidigare är inte så konstigt,' he said in an interview in 1959, 'emigrationen var ett blödande sår i folkroppen, det var inte opportunt eller attraktivt att röra i de missförhållanden som orsakade den.'³ Moberg's timing clearly contributed to the success of the tetralogy, since it was written when emigration, and more importantly, its causes, were being consigned to history. The wound stopped bleeding and could be turned into an honourable scar. As such, it could not be presented as an exclusively economic phenomenon. Moberg has acknowledged that the principal reason for emigration was economic, although there were other incentives, mainly ideological and religious.⁴ In *Utvandrarna* these other incentives are expanded upon because they are more interesting from a literary point of view, and throughout the tetralogy the purely material motive is played down. It is indeed rare to find a literary text that focuses entirely on the material aspect of emigration.

Moberg's personal background, ideological principles, his likes and dislikes – he has expressed aversion towards modern aspects of life such as industrialisation and the hectic chase after commodities⁵ – all have made him the right person to tell the emigrants' story. As Philip Holmes notes, Moberg was born into the reality from which characters like Karl Oskar wished to escape.⁶ His own experiences of small-scale urbanisation – living and working in small towns – and later of city life in

Stockholm, may explain the critical tone towards 'civilisation'.⁷ Thus on the psychological level Moberg feels empathy towards the emigrants who choose to continue a rural lifestyle instead of allowing themselves to be urbanised. On the ideological level things are more ambiguous. Moberg's social and political outlook may be defined as socialistic, but whenever the good of the collective clashed with the well-being of the individual, Moberg tended to sympathise with the individual and his (usually a male character) desire for freedom and independence. Robert and Karl Oskar are two different expressions of this bias towards the individual, the romantic or romanticised loner.

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Utvandrarna (1949) provides the background to the emigration of a group of peasants from Ljuder in Småland and depicts their journey across the Atlantic in 1850. *Invandrarna* (1952) covers events from the immigrants' arrival in America, their inland journey and their first months in the settlement leading up to Christmas. *Nybyggarna* (1956) opens three years later and covers ca. 7 years, while *Sista brevet till Sverige* (1959) begins in 1860 with the outbreak of the Civil War, climaxes in 1862 with the Sioux revolt and Kristina's death, accelerates towards the first peak in mass-immigration (1868), and ends with Karl Oskar's death in 1890. In the following the four volumes will be referred to in abbreviation as *Utv.*, *Inv.*, *Nyb.* and *SBTS*.

In her analysis of the tetralogy, Ingeborg Kongslien identifies four central symbols. They are "brudtäcket", "Indianklippan", "Amerika (Sverige) kistan" and "Astrakanapeln".⁸ Each of the symbols is linked to a different aspect of emigration: the bridal bedspread to the male/female aspect; the Indian Head to the fate of the indigenous people; the chest – *amerika-kistan*, which later becomes *sverige-kistan* – is an inanimate object that symbolises both place and movement, and the apple tree is associated with homesickness and assimilation as well as with concrete and symbolic agricultural aspects. Although it is rewarding to analyse the text through its symbols, indeed it seems that Moberg intended these symbols to dominate the readers' impression of the text, in the following analysis we shall concentrate on the treatment of themes – such as the homeland – instead, with the aim of uncovering some of the

underlying ideological preoccupations of the narrative. Although the tetralogy will be discussed as a typical example of the emigrant novel, an attempt will also be made to outline its unique features and qualities that have made it the best-seller that it is.

Documentation or Apotheosis?

In his article “Moberg and a New Genre for the Emigrant Novel”, Sophus Keith Winther argues for the acceptance of the emigrant novel as a separate genre,⁹ and maintains that the strength and artistic quality of Moberg’s work can only be appreciated if one reads it as an example of that genre. As such, its plot, which is, to a great extent, predictable, is not the source of dramatic tension, but simply the form within which the inner drama – the age-old struggle for freedom and an honourable existence – takes place.¹⁰ Although several sections in the tetralogy contain accounts of perilous adventures that illustrate Karl Oskar’s resourcefulness and courage, they are, following Winther’s argument, examples of drama and suspense that serve the novel’s ideology more than they serve its plot. In conclusion Winther claims that Moberg’s work is ‘true to its genre and thus true to the millions of emigrant families from all the lands across the seas who had the courage and the integrity to tear up their roots in the old world and lay foundations for a better life in America.’¹¹ While it is perfectly logical to assume that since the theme of emigration is universal, a conventionalised literary form to depict it exists, and must be adhered to if the intention is to appeal to a common human denominator. But does adhering to a prototype necessarily imply achieving authenticity? Is it possible that individual experience, such a significant feature of the novel genre, has made way for the representative in the emigrant novel? Has the collective taken over the personal?

Many scholars regard *Utvandrarna* as a collective novel for the simple reason that it is impossible to say which of the characters is the most important. Had the novel ended there it would be crowned a successful attempt to place the collective before the individual, without erasing individual experiences and motivations altogether. In *Berättaren Vilhelm Moberg* (1976), the Swedish Moberg scholar Gunnar Eidevall writes that the author studied Erik Janson (see pp. 15-16 above) and his sect and was fascinated by the idea of the collective. At some point he considered joining the

households of Karl Oskar, Danjel Andreasson and Jonas Petter together, which would have made the collective element a dominant feature of the entire novel. Eventually Karl Oskar's individualism led him further away from the others,¹² and he and his wife Kristina emerged as central characters in the tetralogy's following three volumes. Thus most of the discussion below will concentrate on Karl Oskar and Kristina and their role as representatives of the greater Swedish collective, although a subsection will also be dedicated to Karl Oskar's antithesis – his younger brother Robert.

It is widely known that Moberg spent a great deal of time researching the subject of emigration, and based his novel on letters, diaries, church registers, interviews etc.¹³ The documentary basis of the text is indisputable, but this, however, is no proof of the authenticity of the characters' psychological profile. It is easy to forget that they are literary *constructs* rather than real people. Furthermore, Moberg's historical influences (letter and diary writers) were themselves influenced by the 'rhetoric' of emigration, of America, of homesickness. Since he was not writing from personal experience, Moberg had to *create* an experience, an assemblage of his research, his ideological inclinations and his human insight. It is, by definition, a non-authentic account of emigration. The novel did however win great critical acclaim: 'In Sweden,' writes Holmes, 'the literary critics were almost without exception unstinting in their praise of the tetralogy, stressing in particular the interplay: of Sweden and America, the physical and the spiritual, naturalistic earthiness and subtle symbolism, *highly personalized characterisation and accurate documentation of mass movements.*' (my italics)¹⁴ Also in translation the novel was hailed as 'a historical document' with characters 'of this earth'.¹⁵ Moberg himself wrote of his characters: 'De hade varit med om att bygga upp världens största och mäktigaste republik, men jag ämnade inte framställa dem som några hjältar. [...] De skulle beskrivas som helt vanliga, enkla människor. Jag hade föresatt mig att försöka avheroisera nybyggarskildringen. Och jag ville skriva strängt sakligt, på en dokumenterad verklighets grund'.¹⁶ As the reviews suggest, Moberg was successful in achieving his documentary aim, but can it really be claimed that his characters are 'de-heroised'?

One of the major works on the tetralogy is the document and article collection *Perspektiv på utvandrarromanen* (1971), edited by Erland and Ulla-Britta Lagerroth. Most articles in this book deal with establishing the authenticity and documentary realism of Moberg's novel. However, some critics have also noted the idealising, utopian aspect by pointing out inconsistencies or unlikelyhoods in the text. One of them is Erland Lagerroth, who writes in "Fakta och fiktion i gestaltningen av det amerikanska stoffet" that Chisago Lake as a setting for Swedish pioneering was a logical choice since 'här fanns ett svenskt samhälle i Amerika, som med fördel kunde ställas fram som ett ideal, en kontrast mot förhållandena i hemlandet, ett mönster för hur det i lyckligaste fall kunde gå för en utvandrare.'¹⁷ And yet the route taken by Karl Oskar and his company is a rather unusual one. Whereas most new immigrants spent a certain period in a 'mother colony' established by their fellow countrymen before moving further west, or in other words, were rarely pioneers in previously uninhabited land, Karl Oskar appears as an 'idealfigur som, mirakulöst vägled av Fina-Kajas adresslapp till sonen i Taylors Falls, finner vägen direkt till det jungfruliga landet i Minnesota.'¹⁸ Lagerroth believes that the direct move from one natural environment to the other without stopping in small sordid communities along the way was intended to preserve the novel's 'episka linjen.'¹⁹ By deviating from the common pattern of Swedish emigration around 1850 it was possible to portray Karl Oskar as the '*idealiska (ny)odlaren*'. The novel's 'monumental line' is unbroken, '*utvandrareposet*' blir också '*(ny)odlingseposet*'.²⁰ In Chapter Two the centrality of the myths of the Creation and the Exodus in relation to the New World was noted. It is possible that Moberg, despite his frequent allusions to the various aspects of settling in the Promised Land – with all its political and economic implications as outlined in Chapter Two – is in fact more drawn to the myth of Creation, although not necessarily the biblical version, especially in his portrayal of Karl Oskar. References to Moberg's use of creation imagery will be made throughout this discussion.

Like Lagerroth, Olof Lagercrantz, in his review of *Sista brevet till Sverige*, views Karl Oskar as an idealised representative character, but this he sees as his strength:

‘Han står i allt han företar sig för hela fädernestammen.’²¹ His heroic life as a tenacious farmer makes him ‘inte bara människa utan också halvgud. Han är den personifierade bondekraften. [...] Han är en episk hjälte i förbund med en sädesbärande jord, osårbar, odödlig.’²² And he continues: ‘Denna hans gudomliga sida får man inte glömma. Han får inte mätas med smårealistiska mått. En del av hans väsen sträcker sig in i myten och sagan.’²³ Returning to Lagerroth’s article, in which he notes another historical fact that Moberg chose to overlook, and that is the numbers of Swedish immigrants in the vicinity of the Chisago settlement. The isolation of Karl Oskar and his fellow immigrants also contributes to the ‘mythical’ pioneer atmosphere. Lagerroth links the rural ideals in *Utvandrarna* to national-romantic values, which are succeeded by another form of romanticism in the following volumes: ‘det gamla nordiska bondesamhällets nationalromantik följs, efter resans långa parentes, av rousseauansk vildmarks- och nyodlingsromantik.’ But, as he notes, this is ‘*saklig* romantik’ that co-exists peacefully with the documentary ambition.²⁴ One may therefore propose the term ‘documentary romanticism’ to characterise the tetralogy, although this chapter is not mainly concerned with such definitions. The following analysis will nonetheless attempt to determine whether the term is indeed appropriate.

The Soil: Friend or Foe?

In an introductory chapter in *Utvandrarna*, “Bygden som de lämnade”, Ljuder parish is presented to the reader in a dry, matter-of-fact manner. As in Lagerlöf’s opening pages of *Jerusalem* (see section 4 below), the first ‘character’ to be introduced is the earth itself: ‘Jordmånen utgöres av svartmylla omväxlande med mo- och sandjord.’²⁵ But unlike Lagerlöf, Moberg’s descriptions are lacking in adjectives, giving the impression that no special emotional bond exists between the farmer and his soil. It will however gradually emerge that Moberg is by no means indifferent to the romantic pull of the soil, and that his ‘objective’ descriptions conceal frustration at the native land’s inability to support its people.

As Yi-Fu Tuan demonstrated with his ‘vertical cosmos’ (see p. 7 above), the traditional vertical spatial perception consists of three elements: heaven, man and

earth (as in *Jerusalem*). In Moberg's world, however, it is usually limited to two: man and earth. That man and earth belong to one another is evident from the opening paragraphs of the first volume. History, and hence a sense of identity and belonging, are formed through a series of repetitions: 'De var jordens folk och de kom från en släkt, som sedan årtusenden hade brukat den jord de [utvandrarerna] lämnade.' (*Utv.* 5) A change in perception comes with technological advances that make travel easier, and the horizontal dimension is introduced: 'Jordklotets delar fördes närmare varandra.' (*Utv.* 5) Soil, however, is and remains a major push and pull factor that is introduced in the novel's very beginning: 'Det nya landet hade jord utan brukare och kallade på jordbrukare utan jord.' (*Utv.* 6) This sentence sums up Karl Oskar's incentives, but is, at the same time, an idealised portrayal of a complex psychological and moral issue.

Utvandrarerna's first section, "Grindar på Amerikavägen", opens with the aptly titled chapter "Kung i stenriket". The stone kingdom is Korpamoen, the Nilsson's family farm that Karl Oskar will eventually leave for Minnesota's fertile soil, and which is at this point owned by Karl Oskar's father, Nils Jakobs Son. The chapter clearly demonstrates the antagonistic relationship between man and earth in the Old World. What will later become a dominant feature of Karl Oskar's relationship with God, namely scepticism and defiance, is already here expressed in the form of criticism of God's creation: 'det såg ut här som om det hade regnat sten från himlen under skapelsens alla sex dagar.' (*Utv.* 16) Nils conducts a relentless battle against the stony soil, which eventually turns him into an invalid. His son inherits the farm, and unable to proceed with the creation where God has ended it (*Utv.* 26), he becomes a king of a stone kingdom. Implied in this short-lived resignation is Karl Oskar's desire not only to cultivate the soil but to participate in its creation, an opportunity which America presents him with. Preceding his decision to emigrate is precisely the realisation that even 'the sweat of thy brow' – the status quo established after the Fall – does not yield harvests, that instead of relying on God to provide man in the world which He created and then cursed, man must seek to create his own world under his own terms. Moberg's criticism of religion merges with his political convictions to form Karl Oskar's vision of America, the place where hard work and self-reliance,

mental as well as practical, are rewarded. Notions of personal well-being and happiness are significantly never mentioned in relation to Karl Oskar's motives. This is both a realistic feature – assuming that in the 19th Century the head of a family on the verge of starvation was little concerned with self-fulfilment – and at the same time, once more, a reduction of Karl Oskar's motivation to the purely idealistic. This duality will dominate Karl Oskar's character in particular, and the text as a whole, throughout the four volumes.

Once in America, freed from the constraints of the Swedish agricultural reality, Moberg expresses a far more romantic view of the soil, inspired, as Lagerroth observed,²⁶ by Rousseau-esque ideals. But the ideal aspired to and fulfilled by a fertile land is not only of mental liberation but also of material well-being. Throughout the emigrant epic agriculture is exulted as the highest value and hence the only form of life acceptable to the narrator. Furthermore, Moberg seems to suggest that the earth owes man reward for his hard work: 'den [slätten] hade legat här i träde och vilat sig sedan skapelsens dag. Odlaren var kommen, og den tid var sannerligen inne då jorden här var skyldig att ge bröd åt människorna.'²⁷ This statement somewhat contradicts romantic attitudes to nature, attitudes which often reflect the notion that man is insignificant against a sublime and awe-inspiring nature. One may therefore suggest that such recurrent statements in the novel reflect not only Moberg's ideals but also his desire to appeal to his readers by expressing widely held Swedish convictions concerning the necessity of land cultivation and pragmatic attitudes towards it. Furthermore it may be assumed that the romantic appeal of the 'foreign' (American) soil is limited in Swedish eyes, and immigration must therefore be justified in practical terms.

As the novel progresses it becomes evident that Karl Oskar's decision to emigrate was justified from his point of view, since the land rewards his efforts with increasingly richer crops. Kristina acknowledges the blessing of abundance, but from her perspective the earth is so full of potential and therefore so demanding, that the spiritual dimension may be lost. She feels Karl Oskar has become a slave to his soil by constantly wanting to broaden his plot and has, as a consequence, lost the vertical

element, which is synonymous with spirituality. Kristina also experiences fertility as oppressive when, in *Nybyggarna*'s third section titled "Välsignad kvinna", she prays that God spare her from yet another pregnancy (Nyb. 483). There is irony in the fact that she appeals for 'barrenness' in the fertile landscape that surrounds her. Gradually it becomes evident that the bountiful earth of the New World, initially associated with the forces of vitality, cannot be dissociated from its other connotation, that of death. As in several novels mentioned in the previous chapter, the real bond with the new place is not established until a plot of land is designated as the immigrants' cemetery: 'Här i landet skulle de inte blott framleva återstoden av sitt liv, här skulle de också stanna kvar såsom döda. Vid utflyttningen hade de inte genomtänkt dess säkra följd: Att deras gravar skulle grävas i en annan jord än fädernas. [...] deras utvandring icke blott räckte för timligheten, utan även skulle utsträckas till evigheten.' (Nyb. 200-201) Only through physical (dis)integration with the soil does man become part of it.

In the last volume there is further evidence that the antagonistic relationship between man and earth, thought to be a characteristic of the Old World, has been transplanted in the New. Karl Oskar and his sons clear the last plot of land and remove the ancient oak trees in an effort described as an attack ('anfall').²⁸ Previous descriptions of land clearing as a peaceful act are replaced with more violent terms. Symbolically, the last oak falls on Karl Oskar's back (*SBTV* 262-263), making him an invalid in the same way a stone has incapacitated his father. The cycle is complete, although Moberg's interpretation of its meaning is rather ambiguous. Is man's apparent victory over nature only an illusion, and should man aspire to subdue nature for his own needs, in which case, where does one draw the line between genuine need and greedy exploitation?

The Longed-for Place

In an article titled "Konflikten mellan dröm och verklighet i Roberts och Kristinas öden", Rigmor Andersson writes: 'Ett genomgående tema i alla fyra delarna av Vilhelm Mobergs utvandrarroman utgör spelet mellan dröm och verklighet för huvudpersonerna.'²⁹ In *Utvandrarna*, Sweden's harsh reality feeds the dream of

America, 'bildernas och ryktenas land' (*Utv.* 117), although, in Kristina's view, 'Allt främmande är farligt, men hemroten är känd och trygg' (*Utv.* 117). Gradually a partial reversal occurs in the concepts, although America remains dangerous for a long time, and for Kristina it is never the 'known' place. America's reality forces the characters to form new dreams, dreams which on the whole go back to the homeland, although in the case of Robert and Karl Oskar this only occurs shortly before their death.

Whereas Kristina has no longed-for place before setting off, and in that sense makes an 'uninteresting' literary emigrant, Robert, Danjel and Ulrika's dreams are concerned with changing their circumstances more than their place. Their desire for freedom – personal and religious – is projected upon a place, which only in Robert's case is a concrete place about which he gathers information. Karl Oskar is the only character with a vision that corresponds to what the specific place has to offer and this is possibly why his role in the novel is so central. He represents a sober kind of utopianism, his longed-for place seemingly devoid of unnecessary romantic or religious notions.³⁰ The New World is a symbol of physical salvation, but it acquires a spiritual dimension because it carries the promise of justice and prosperity which are characteristics of the Promised Land and God's Heavenly Kingdom. An interesting example of an ambiguous play on religious themes is the scene in which Karl Oskar looks at a picture of a wheat field in North America. 'Det var ett fält i bärgseltiden [...] en slätt utan gräns eller kant eller slut. Veteåkern tog ingen ände [...] Och inte en enda sten, inte ett enda röse, inte en enda kullrighet eller ojämnhet [...] Och från en himmel utan moln sken solen över all den gullgula sädens mängd.' (*Utv.* 119) The picture's majestic beauty and overwhelming fertility suggest much more than a simple field of grain, yet it is the material abundance of America that attracts Karl Oskar: 'Han förlustade sitt sinne med att betrakta den. Han höll tidningsbladet framför sig liksom i andakt, som han brukade sitta i kyrkbänken om söndagarna med sin psalmbok i handen och följa med i sången.' (*Utv.* 120) He comes to the conclusion that in the New World God has not yet cursed the earth, and hence the 'sinful' worldly image is turned sacred. In the New World spiritual and material are inseparable, just as they were before the Fall.

An important aspect of Karl Oskar's longed-for place is that it is the *negative* of all that he sees around him. He is attracted to the open, flat and stone-free prairie land, but the landscape he eventually chooses to settle in is more reminiscent of Sweden. The immigrants' encounter with the various American landscapes kindles their 'geographical bias' and makes them want to be surrounded by the same landscape they are familiar with, a landscape they consider more complete since it contains all the elements of God's creation. When they do find the desired landscape they experience it not only visually, but also by using their sense of smell: 'Platsen luktade skog och skogsavfall, färskt, nysågat furuvirke, kåda, sågspån och torkande trä.'³¹ Whereas the longed-for place is a construct of vague ideals, the place one feels at home in must have a tangible, sensual appeal. The woods, however, also have a symbolic significance in Moberg's work. They represent protection and security, and are associated with freedom. That is why Karl Oskar builds his new home by the woods that provide him with timber and game, and guarantee his independence from other people.³²

One might however wish to question whether the place Karl Oskar creates in Minnesota is indeed real. In the review of *Sista brevet till Sverige* mentioned earlier, Lagercrantz writes, that the realistic element diminishes as Moberg moves to the American soil, the story becoming more dreamlike as the novel progresses. But this, Lagercrantz argues, does not impair the work. He claims that many immigrants based their visions of the longed-for place on the biblical paradise and on fairytales, but Karl Oskar is an exception to the rule by actually finding and creating a place that to a certain extent resembles the vision, 'ett slags himmelskt Småland'.³³ The east-west axis has been typically reversed, but has also moved to a higher sphere. Since immigration often leads to religious conservatism, the original west-east orientation (Old World to the Ancient World) is also re-established, as the narrator notes on the immigrants' burial practices: 'De döda var nedlagda i sina kistor med sina ansikten vända mot öster [...] Det var på österhimmels skyar som Kristus skulle komma på den yttersta dagen för att uppväcka dem.' (*SBTV* 296) Thus the eastward orientation is two-layered, one relating to the physical past, the second to the spiritual future.

One may sum up this subsection by noting that Karl Oskar's achievement as a literary immigrant is the successful harmonisation of the longed-for place in the west, the concrete place (America) and the emerging longed-for place in the east, *i.e.* the homeland. The fact that such a place does not exist in reality is insignificant to the author. Karl Oskar stands for pragmatic idealism that makes it possible to achieve a balance between sentimental attachment to place and a desire to live off the land, wherever that land may be.

Home and Homeland

Compared with many of the novels discussed in the previous chapter, Moberg's sober attitude towards the homeland is rather striking. He does not idealise Sweden, in fact he uses the setting of the 1840s to censure Sweden in the 1940s, and in that sense the novel is not a 'typical' emigrant novel. His criticism of the clergy through Ulrika reflects his own criticism of the official classes in his own time: 'Man skriver ju så mycket bättre om det man hatar'.³⁴ Ulrika is particularly important because she, as an anti-thesis to Kristina, suffers no homesickness and makes the most of the opportunities America presents her with. She offsets the 'home = lost paradise' image Kristina has of Sweden. Even Karl Oskar, an idolised character in himself, which suggests a certain ethnic or national bias (see pp. 177-79 below), expresses a balanced view of the issue by pointing to the futility of resentment towards the homeland or a constant longing to return to it. But does this mean that the homeland is a neglected value in the novel and consequently, that uprooting is an uncomplicated experience? Throughout the text Moberg weighs the pain of uprooting, which is in some, but not all ways equivalent to disloyalty to the homeland, against the individual's desire for freedom. For those whose need for freedom is stronger than attachment to home, the homeland loses its analogous meaning as the emotional 'home', and becomes the concrete Sweden. On the other hand, those whose individuality was dampened by a strong sense of community associate Sweden, and more so as time goes by, with 'home', an abstract notion comprising of a nostalgic longing for one's youth and a sense of identity – both

personal and cultural. In the following, examples from the text will be used to examine the development of the ambiguous home-homeland concept.

In his biographical book *Vilhelm Moberg*, Holmes writes: 'Uprooting is an important theme in Moberg's work. [...] Flight from the community is indicative of a deeper dichotomy between the duty to contribute to the communal effort, to conform, and the desire for self-assertion, for freedom from any commitment.'³⁵ And he goes on to observe that 'in the works he [Moberg] constantly praises the strong individualism of the chauvinistic peasant culture, and yet [he] was a Socialist who believed passionately in the international brotherhood of man.'³⁶ Moberg himself has declared that 'den mest självklara av en människas rättigheter [är] rätten till frihet, frihet i både psykisk och fysisk bemärkelse.'³⁷ Curiously, although Karl Oskar is widely regarded as a 'Swedish hero', his personality is not as marked by this dichotomy as one might expect. He does not have a sense of solidarity with his neighbours and fellow countrymen.³⁸ For him, the only unit existing beyond the self is the core family. In other words, he has no sense of belonging to a collective, which greatly facilitates his uprooting. As the first from the parish to emigrate, his fellow parishioners see him as arrogant and his decision as 'en anklagelse och förnärmelse mot hemsocknen.' (*Utv.* 161) Moberg captures the atmosphere in mid-19th Century Sweden by showing that emigration was not linked to heroism and national glorification, if anything it was considered to be a foolhardy and unpatriotic act. When trying to dissuade Karl Oskar from emigrating, the dean, Brusander, terms the venture 'äventyr' (*Utv.* 197), clearly using the word in its negative sense (see p. 148 above), and accuses Karl Oskar of disobedience to the spiritual authorities, and by implication to the fatherland. He tells Karl Oskar of the fate of Erik Janson's followers and concludes: 'Efter vad som hänt dessa sekterister kände man Guds mening om utvandringen.' (*Utv.* 200) Only modern readers can see the heroic aspect in the decision taken by the pioneers, presumably because these pioneers, in Moberg's account, never cease to be Swedish. Their bold decision is a reflection of their Swedish character, not a rejection of it.

Typical of Moberg's structuring of the narrative in all four volumes is a combination of chapters with general and often poetic descriptions in which no names are mentioned, only 'utvandrarna', 'invandrarna' etc., with chapters depicting the same events, this time from the point of view of a specific character.³⁹ Incidentally, this long-shot and close-up method is also used by Hauge and Lagerlöf, and is perhaps an attempt to emphasise the representative element of the individual characters. In this way it becomes apparent that observations about the experiences of the collective, or representative, also apply to the individual characters and vice versa. Thus in the following the use of the personal pronoun 'they' refers both to specific and to unnamed characters.

During the Atlantic crossing a gradual shift in perceptions concerning the homeland takes place. At first the emigrants believe they will miss friends but not the country itself (*Utv.* 245). Later they begin to associate the homeland with their youth and therefore become nostalgic (*Utv.* 246). With the growing distance away from the homeland, they express a growing reluctance to vilify it. (*Utv.* 363) Finally they come to the realisation that they still consider Sweden their *home*, although none of them has a concrete home in that country. Moreover, on seeing a ship sailing in the opposite direction with the Swedish flag hoisted, they begin to associate the abstract symbolism of the flag with the emotional concept of home (*Utv.* 364), and they experience a deep sense of loss. But obviously this loss is the price they must pay in order to find a new homeland, and the torturous journey, although a realistic description of prevailing conditions, also functions on a psychological level. Gillian Tindall writes in *Countries of the Mind*: 'traditionally, the journey is from the known to the unknown, from shelter to exposure, from identity to anonymity, from safety into danger, and also (the positive view of the same phenomenon) from captivity into freedom.'⁴⁰ In *Utvandrarna* the journey does not signify a process as much as it is a situation, a state of limbo, neither *home* nor *away* – two key notions that will dominate the narrative in the following three volumes. It is, moreover, a fateful journey since 'denna resa gjorde människor endast en gång.' (*Utv.* 407) The sense of homelessness is accentuated by the fact that the emigrants are people of the soil. The farmers, as Captain Lorentz describes them, are 'bundna vid sin torva, de älskar

torvan och mullen över allting här i världen.' (*Utv.* 257) The journey is difficult for them not only because of its harshness but also because home for them is 'ett fredat, varaktigt ställe på marken, ett stillastående rum' (*Utv.* 365). Although water is a symbol of freedom and hence of life in Robert's case (see pp. 192-94 below), the ocean for most emigrants is more closely associated with death, or a 'neither nor' situation. For them, life equals earth, and so the renewed encounter with the land, even if it is a foreign land, is experienced as a revival (*Utv.* 441). The state of limbo ends officially several years later, when the immigrants become American citizens (*Nyb.* 487).

In *Invandrarna*, the search for a home is a major theme, discussed through aspects such as the preservation of customs and language against the need to assimilate and be understood, and the encounter with new landscapes. While Karl Oskar sees America as his future home and certainly the future home of his children, Kristina, even prior to emigration, perceives America in terms of *exile* (*Utv.* 125). She envisages herself and her family wandering helplessly like children, unable to speak the language and ask for assistance.⁴¹ On arrival in America her fears are confirmed. The immigrants are deaf, dumb and helpless (*Inv.* 40). Language is however also the tool to combat isolation: 'sedan de kommit till främmande trakter, där språket avskilde dem från andra människor, hade de blivit en mera sluten skara än förr. De hade en egendom gemensam: sitt tungomål.' (*Inv.* 176) From being a simple means of communication language gradually gains importance as a link to one's cultural identity and sense of belonging. But this does not diminish the importance, indeed the necessity to learn a new language, which is again associated with a loss of identity. The mixed Swedish-American dialect that gradually replaces the pure Småland dialect (Kristina's speech is a noticeable and significant exception) demonstrates in a concrete way the idea that America lacks a vertical dimension, that life marked by tradition has become a life marked by change. In his essay on the unique Swedish-American language, Arthur Landfors writes: 'blandspråket talas nästan uteslutande av endast första generationen av invandrarna. Det går inte i arv från far till son till sonson.'⁴²

Landscapes, familiar and new, are a second and equally important aspect of the immigrants' meeting with America. Travelling towards their destination they encounter varied landscapes, many of them evidently fertile. Yet it is not so much the possibilities the land offers that interests them as much as its dissimilarity to Sweden: 'Allting var annorlunda i Amerika, dag och natt, väderlek och djur: Värmen var varmare, mörkret var mörkare, regnet var blötare än hemma – och myggen var tusen gånger elakare än i Sverige' (*Inv.* 222). As many of these observations are linked to Kristina's anxiety and sense of homelessness, they tend to stress the negative aspects of American nature and wildlife. The restlessness experienced on the ocean reappears when the immigrants encounter the prairie, evoking the widely used ocean/prairie metaphor:

'De passerade genom ett oöverskådligt slättland, en ändlös tomhet av öppen, tuvig, flack mark. Lika litet som på Oceanen fann ögonen något fäste i omnejden: Inga träd, inga skogsdungar, inga kullar, inga backar, inga berg. [...] Liksom Atlantiska havet utbreddes sig den trädlösa, öde vidden för dem som en enda trakt. Ingenting under himlarunden skilde den ena landsträckan från den andra. [...] Under sjuttio dagar hade invandrarna överfärdit Atlantiska oceanen, ett hav av vatten. Nu färdades de över det nordamerikanska slättlandet, ett hav av gräs.' (*Inv.* 134-135)

The repetition of the metaphor, of which these are but a few examples, is intended to emphasise the 'geographical' shock experienced by immigrants, the feeling of insignificance which the vast and featureless landscape evokes and the difficulties in adjusting to a new place, leading to involuntary homesickness. Moberg, however, does not necessarily share his characters' inability to appreciate other landscapes, and dedicates numerous pages to presenting the varied American landscapes to his reader.⁴³ This gives the narrative a certain textbook effect, and is a rather unusual feature of the emigrant novel, since in many of them landscape descriptions are based on comparisons to familiar environments.

A central chapter in *Invandrarna* is suggestively titled "Hem till en främmande skog" and although the narrator uses the collective noun ('invandrarna') it seems to reflect first and foremost Karl Oskar's feelings: 'Invandrarna från Ljuder hade kommit till en främmande skog, och de hade kommit hem: De var inte längre de bortvillade i världen.' (*Inv.* 219) Here Moberg expresses the rather uncommon view

that immigrants can find a home away from home, although its similarity to their original habitat is a decisive factor. When Karl Oskar locates his new home it is suggested that he has had a former, even if vague, link with it: 'Och han kände det som om denna jord hade legat här och väntat på honom.' (*Inv.* 266) Although practical in all matters, his choice of land appears rather emotional, even erotic with its reference to the feminine attributes of the soil: 'Denna *fruktbara* jord [...] hade legat här *orörd*' (*Inv.* 266, my italics). Soon, however, the language becomes harsher: 'den utflyttade bonden från Stenriket Korpamoen var framme vid Matjordens rike för att ta det i besittning.' (*Inv.* 268) Meaning either 'taking possession' or 'taking by force', the sexual connotation is still there, but it has now acquired aggressive overtones. At the same time, this chapter, echoing Hamsun's epical *Markens grøde*, is a eulogy to the pioneer who *creates* rather than *finds* a home. Karl Oskar is an Isak Sellanraa who is in turn both God and Adam in a newly created world.

So much for the new home, but what about the old one? As the novel progresses its importance increases, mainly because the focus shifts more and more towards Kristina and her struggle with homesickness, but also because the immigrants as a collective both consciously and unconsciously continue to see 'Swedishness' as a model upon which to structure their lives. While Karl Oskar builds their new home, Kristina ponders on the meaning of 'home'. She becomes preoccupied with the notions of 'hemma' vs. 'borta' (*Inv.* 328) and tries to come to terms with never going back to Sweden, while at the same time knowing that America can never be home for her. In *The Nature of the Place* Diane Dufva Quantic coins the term 'eternal pioneer' to denote a sense of homelessness which is typical of female characters like Kristina and Rølvaag's Beret.⁴⁴ Gradually home comes to represent one's childhood as much as it represents the longed-for place. When Kristina dreams of Sweden she does not dream of the home she shared with Karl Oskar in Korpamoen, but of her childhood home in Duvemåla. Although seemingly a 'geographical' affliction, homesickness, expressed for instance in the repetitive referring to spring nights in Sweden – 'där kvällarna om våren var ljusa' (*Inv.* 476, 477, note the use of the past tense) – is in fact an expression of longing for the past. It has a temporal element that is at least as important as the spatial one.

In *Nybyggarna* an attempt is made to bring the old home to the new through two symbolic actions. Karl Oskar has in the previous volume asked Kristina's parents to send seeds of the astrakhan apple, which grew outside Kristina's home. In this volume it is introduced as a delicate plant that will require a long time to blossom, but which will eventually lead to a successful merging of the old and new. Karl Oskar believes that the seeds from the Old Country are good, but they need the soil of the New World, and as Holmes remarks, 'clearly Karl Oskar's words may be interpreted in a wider sense: America offers a potentially favorable environment for the growth of a sound Swedish stock, be it plants or humans.'⁴⁵ For Kristina, however, the apple tree is a relic from the homeland and has no associations with America. The second symbolic action, in a chapter titled "Att plantera hemlandet", is Karl Oskar's gesture of naming the new settlement "Duvemåla". This too backfires since it makes Kristina's homesickness even harder to bear. In her dreams she is back in Sweden and the journey to America is just a bad dream. Kristina herself makes an attempt to bring Sweden closer by planting flowers she is familiar with from home. When she fails she comes to the frequently quoted conclusion: 'Det var och förblev evinnerligt besvärligt att plantera hemlandet i en främmad jord. Det gick inte i en handvändning för en människa att byta länder och göra borta till hemma.' (*Nyb.* 73)

The different phases the characters go through (especially Robert and Kristina, who have a greater role in *Nybyggarna*) are related to the experience of the new place and the severing of ties with the homeland. At the same time they can be interpreted as changes in their perception of their relationship with God. The two main characters mark two different directions in life experiences and philosophies: Karl Oskar succeeds in realising his dream of freedom and responsibility for his own fate. He is emancipated from worldly and spiritual authorities, and is therefore absorbed in his new land, symbolised by his joy at receiving his American citizenship. With the arrival of more immigrants from Ljuder Karl Oskar feels that his old parish will be 'resurrected' in America, and realises that he has shown his countrymen the way to a bigger new homeland (*Nyb.* 473). Kristina gradually becomes resigned to her fate and is more interested in her spiritual welfare than in her material existence. From

feeling she is still on the journey rather than at her destination (*Nyb.* 126), she develops the image of the journey as a metaphor for life, with home arrived at only in the afterlife. She does not make America her home, but claims she is no longer homesick: 'Int gör dä nåenting varstädes en människa har sin bostad här i lekamliheten. I ena eller annra hörnet av världen. Dä enda som gäller för mej numer ä den längre visstelsen.' (*Nyb.* 532)

Nonetheless it seems that Kristina's claim to resignation is not entirely honest, since she continues to be preoccupied with the preservation of the Swedish language and customs. Towards the end of the volume Sweden becomes Kristina's fairytale dreamland, an image that she tries to implant in her children (*Nyb.* 524-525). It is however true that the emphasis shifts towards religious matters, since Christianity becomes associated with the homeland. Also for the other immigrants the clearest expression of attachment to Sweden is the desire to re-establish familiar religious practices. The arrival of an ordained priest from Sweden, and later the establishment of a Lutheran church, marks the settlers' acceptance of the place as their new home in which old traditions must be reinstated. On the role of the church in linking the old with the new Mircea Eliade writes: 'The door that opens on the interior of the church actually signifies a solution of continuity. The threshold that separates the two spaces also indicates the distance between two modes of being, the profane and the religious.'⁴⁶ But the people who build the church are not the servile men they were in Sweden. They have been transformed by freedom, and although the role of the church is to be similar, it will also reflect American values of democracy and equality. Power and responsibility will be shared by all members, and its democratic features are those which explain Moberg's increasingly tolerant view of religion in the novel's last two volumes.

The 'home-away' debate continues in *Sista brevet till Sverige*. In her last years Kristina considers home only that which is permanent ("eviga hem") – the wandering on the face of the earth is just a phase on the way home, but the ambiguity of her resignation, noted above, continues to dominate her outlook. Seeing the apple tree gradually grow stronger, she looks forward to the day when her children can taste the

fruit from her homeland, implying that her earthly home has not lost its meaning altogether. Poignantly she dies after biting into the first fruit the tree bore. As she tastes the apple she whispers 'jag ä hemma' (*SBTV* 192).

After Kristina's death Karl Oskar begins to see the futility of his efforts. He has built a prosperous farm and secured the future of his children, and even changed his name to Charles O. Nelson to mark his absorption in the New World. Yet as he grows older he finds himself thinking of Sweden more and more often. His sole comfort is a tattered map of Ljuder which he studies every day, re-living his youth by touching familiar place names and topographical features. He acquires the map in return for his consent to the marriage of his daughter with Klas Albert (*SBTV* 229). His request surprises his future son-in-law, but as noted earlier, for Karl Oskar land is occasionally perceived as a feminine being. As a possible variation on the theme, the abstraction of the homeland (a map, incidentally heart-shaped) is viewed by him as equal in value to a woman (in this instance, a daughter). Studying the map resembles the process of searching for a home. Karl Oskar is too old and frail to move freely, but can wander effortlessly on the map, travelling the paths of his home parish. But as in Kristina's case the longing for home is in fact a longing for his youth, and specifically to the days of their courtship. His apparent and uncharacteristic homesickness is in fact a longing for the woman he loved. He never regrets leaving, although he wishes he could see his homeland again, thus admitting that America never really became his home. However, this is due to the fact that he is a family-orientated man, and the loss of his wife meant the loss of his sense of home. Unlike Kristina he takes the responsibility upon himself and limits the role of God in his life, which means that he does not believe he will find his 'real' home after death, although the shift from life to death is described as yet another change of abode: 'det var bara en flyttning som återstod honom – från en värld till en annan.' (*SBTV* 291)

It appears, then, that throughout the tetralogy Moberg distinguishes between home and the homeland, and allows his characters to experience and explore the subtle differences between the two. Regarding the abstract notion of home Moberg is again rather ambiguous in his interpretation, since the reader is first given the impression

that Karl Oskar has succeeded in creating/finding a better home for himself and his children, and yet he too eventually realises that America is not his 'real' home.

The Chosen People

In his study of *Utvandrarna*, Holmes writes that Moberg was careful to portray his characters from various angles, including the viewpoint of marginal characters, in order to prevent the peasant emigrants from appearing 'too heroic',⁴⁷ supporting Moberg's own claim to documentary realism.⁴⁸ In the following, specific passages in the text will be examined in order to expand on the argument made earlier, that although the novel has a strong documentary basis, its characters often represent ideals rather than 'real' complex humans.

Moberg's appraisal of the emigrants' pioneer spirit is made clear from the outset. In the opening of *Utvandrarna* they are introduced as 'de djärvaste' and 'de företagsamme' (*Utv.* 6), those who did not resign to their lot of poverty in Sweden, but took action to improve it. That 'deras utvandrings äventyr skall snart ingå i sagan och legenden' (*Utv.* 6) again suggests that the realistic/documentary stance of the novel is only partially adhered to. While it may be that Moberg intends to disperse foggy notions surrounding emigration and reveal the facts, he at the same time contributes to the creation of a new modern myth.

In this modern myth the incentives for emigration and its success or failure are seemingly more important than the individuals who partake in it. Winther convincingly argues that viewing Karl Oskar as the 'hero' of the novel would be mistaken since 'the hero, although he may be in himself a great dramatic figure, is not as important as the fortunes of his people.'⁴⁹ Since Moberg's characters, not unlike Bojer's in *Vor egen stamme*, represent a catalogue of push and pull factors, they are far more likely to be 'flat' emblems of socio-historical phenomena than 'round' characters, to use E.M. Forster's terminology.⁵⁰ Although he has produced touching descriptions of the characters' innermost feelings, these tend to be of a limited scope – or in other words, each character seems solely preoccupied with matters relating to his or her initial expectations (or in Kristina's case, fears) of

emigration. Karl Oskar is determined to earn a living as a farmer and hence his thoughts are dedicated to the land. Kristina represents attachment to the home, and hence her life is spent pondering over the concept of home. Robert is resolved to gain individual freedom, and so his story becomes a debate about the meaning of freedom. This tendency is even more evident in minor characters, such as Danjel Andreasson and Ulrika i Västergöhl. Danjel, the dissenter who seeks religious freedom in America, is mentioned mainly in relation to the religious aspect of emigration, and once he finds his freedom virtually disappears from the novel, although back in Sweden his role as the defender of society's outcasts was at least as important as his role as a religious figure, which explains his prominence in the first volume. Ulrika, too, although a loveable and credible character, is first and foremost a symbol of the uplifting powers of freedom and equality. Another important point to make – and only an apparent contradiction to Winther's above argument, since his is based on a desired critical approach while the following one on the response of the ordinary reader – is that whereas Moberg may have been aiming to produce a collective novel, readers tend to look for a central character, preferably one of stature, especially in a text, which consciously evokes associations with the Bible. As a result, Karl Oskar emerges as the novel's heroic protagonist, although his importance stems from what he stands for rather than the amount written about him.⁵¹ He fulfils Moberg's ideal because he defies God, and thus represents individualism and resourcefulness in a world characterised by fatalistic passivity.

Also those who read the tetralogy as a collective novel may be left with an overall impression that the collective in question is not only representative but also a model to aspire to. It is a group of chosen people, rebels and dissidents, not ordinary emigrants motivated by material considerations. Idealised characters are clearly intended to appeal to a universal public, since ideological, moral and heroic behaviour is generic to all epic narratives. There is, however, also an attempt to appeal to the specific national sentiment. In the Scandinavian context the ideal is frequently linked to a rigorous work ethic, which will be expanded upon in the following subsection, but just as much to external matters such as a Nordic appearance, sobriety, neatness and cleanliness. Although it is often the characters,

rather than the omniscient narrator, who express the national point of view, it is clear that Moberg is not in disagreement with them. One such example is Robert's observation that the emigrants must not be mistaken for gypsies. The emigrants are 'störväxta och ljusa i håret och hyn, men tattare var småvuxna och svarta. Och alla hade de hela kläder och var tvättade och rena, men tattare var trasiga och lortiga. Och de for tysta och stilla och nyktra sin väg fram, men tattare levde illa, skrek och väsnades och var druckna och vildsinta.' (*Utv.* 220) Another example is Kapten Lorentz' assessment of the emigrants he carries on board his ship: '*Charlottas* människolast hade vid varje överfart till nio tiondedelar bestått av idoga lantmän. Lättingarna och oduglingarna, rymlingarna och skälmarna kom mestadels från andre länder' (*Inv.* 14). The positive national image is supplemented by numerous references to other nations based entirely on prevalent stereotypes. Particularly surprising are prejudiced comments on the dirty, lazy and foul-mouthed Irish (see: *Inv.* 171-72 and *Nyb.* 130-131).⁵² A worrying tendency in the narrator's attitude to 'others' – possibly an ironic reflection of his characters' prejudices – is offset in the last volume, in which Karl Oskar reluctantly acknowledges that his purely Swedish grandchildren are not as lively or as beautiful as those of mixed marriages (*SBTV* 276-278). The prejudices of the first three volumes are toned down in the fourth, but this is not to say that the book plays down the importance of national or ethnic origin, or that it expresses clear anti-segregationist views. If anything it promotes the notion that America's prosperity is due to the 'Swedishness' of many of its inhabitants.

The Scandinavian Work Ethic as Moral Justification for Land Seizure

In *The Role of Place in Literature*, Leonard Lutwack notes a trend in American literature, in which the experience of wilderness prepares a man for a special role in society. His term for man's struggle to adapt to hostile environments is 'moral geography'.⁵³ This term seems appropriate for interpreting the process of settlement in Moberg's emigrant epic, only here the moral debate revolves around man's use of the landscape as much as his adaptability to it, two issues which are often inseparable. Since Moberg's ideal is an agrarian one, those of his characters who dedicate their lives to agriculture are the most likely to prosper.⁵⁴ Combined with the general consensus regarding the Scandinavian work ethic⁵⁵ is Moberg's specific

ideological preoccupation with freedom. Hence 'suitability' for immigration is determined not only by the character's level of diligence but also by his independence. He who relies upon himself can meet the challenge of hard work and the burden of responsibility. On the other hand, he who has a 'feudal' concept of his relationship with God – submission in return for patronage – will find America too harsh and demanding, and is likely to feel lost or forsaken.

Karl Oskar is perhaps the epitome of the Swedish work ethic and a powerful example of defiance of Old World resignation. He believes that 'den man som inte kunde förkovra sig här, i denna frikostiga frihet, i detta fruktbara land, han dög inte till någonting i denna världen.' (*Inv.* 299) Those who dream of instant wealth, dazzled by the country's apparent abundance, have no chance of survival, an assessment which is poignantly true regarding Robert, who, as Karl Oskar sees it, has a 'fel' in him (*Inv.* 381). This flaw makes Robert flaccid and impractical, and his declared wealth, on his return from California (a journey that never took place), despicable. 'Han [Karl Oskar] hade aldrig trott på någon annan varaktig förkovran än med människors redliga arbete [...] det var bara det ärliga arbetets lön som bestod.' (*Nyb.* 234)⁵⁶ At this point the national-romantic view of the peasant as a paragon clashes somewhat with the romantic admiration of the poetic dreamer and consequently the authorial voice is more sympathetic towards Robert than his [Robert's] own brother. However, since the desire to become prosperous through gold digging, and indeed by any other means apart from agriculture, is morally unacceptable to Moberg, Robert's fate is sealed. To emphasise his disapproval of the path taken by Robert and his friend Arvid – the California trail and not the Minnesota furrows – Moberg shows how the earth itself changes its nature and castigates those who, from his point of view, abuse it as well as their own potential: 'Vad var det för ett avogt och elakt land [...] Här ville till och med gräs och blommor göra dem illa i händerna.' (*Nyb.* 282)

If the land only tolerates those who till it, then surely those who 'neglect' it have no claim to it. This approach is typical of Western thinking in the modern era, and is manifested in various literary accounts in which the moral dilemma of banishing

indigenous inhabitants is discussed. As early as 1516 Thomas More expressed in *Utopia* the cold logic of expulsion:

‘if the natives refuse to conform themselves to their [the Utopians’] laws, they drive them out of those bounds which they mark out for themselves, and use force if they resist. For they account it a very just cause of war, for a nation to hinder others from possessing a part of that soil, of which they make no use, but which is suffered to lie idle and uncultivated; since every man has by the law of Nature a right to such a waste portion of the earth as is necessary for his subsistence.’⁵⁷

In the battle against those who fail to till the land not only the ‘law of Nature’ was enlisted, but also the law of God. When white settlers began cultivating the areas west of the Mississippi they found that the land was not only fertile but also inhabited. But, as Quantic notes, ‘that the lands were already occupied by Indian inhabitants seemed a minor inconvenience to those who believed that Manifest Destiny gave the United States rights to the entire continent. The Indians, who did not cultivate the land or establish permanent towns, obviously were not using the land as God intended.’⁵⁸ In post-industrialised Western thinking the agrarian lifestyle became a romantic ideal, and many turned to the Bible for inspiration, since the biblical ideal, as noted in Chapter Two, is also essentially pastoral. If America is a Canaan – commonly misinterpreted as a land *belonging* to the Israelites rather than to God,⁵⁹ its derivative misconception is that the European conquest and colonisation of the land is not only inevitable but also justified. In *Nybyggarna* the visiting Pastor Törner reassures the immigrants that they have acted upon God’s will and that white settlers were destined to replace the Indians as masters of the land (*Nyb.* 96-97). Since Moberg’s tone towards the church is generally critical, and since there is a ‘thorny’ ring to the pastor’s name, it may be assumed that the author rejects the religious alibi for an essentially unchristian act. In addition, the Indian concept of the relationship between man and earth, as expressed by ‘Röd hövding’ (‘Människan är icke ägare till jorden.’ *SBTV* 140) seems to attract Moberg, although he finds it impractical.

Nevertheless, even if he rejects the law of God, Moberg still accepts the law of nature, which ties in with his agrarian ideal. A recurring motif in the emigrant epic is censure of the Indian who is, in Swedish eyes, too indolent to cultivate the land.⁶⁰

The only grain grown by the indigenous people, Indian corn, is in fact known as 'Latmans Säd' (*Nyb.* 106). Karl Oskar wonders why God extended His blessing to the heathen grain while grains grown by Christians were not as copious. The theological matter that puzzles Karl Oskar is for the author a moral maze into which he is compelled to enter. He claims that the downfall of the Indians is inevitable (*Nyb.* 8), but fails to explain why they must die in order to allow white man to thrive. Perhaps he is merely stating a historical fact, or perhaps he is passing judgement on the people who committed the 'secular sin' of living a hunter-gatherer lifestyle while plenty of arable land was available to them. Be that as it may, the controversial ethics of colonisation continued to haunt him, and he was acutely aware of the injustices and atrocities carried out by white men.⁶¹ Based on statements made by Moberg, Eidevall notes that the author consciously broke with tradition in his portrayal of Indians, and that he formed his image of them on the basis of reliable oral accounts by Swedish settlers, who declared that the pioneers lived in harmony with 'vildarna'.⁶² Significantly, Karl Oskar and Kristina treat the Indians they come into contact with respectfully, although he despises them and she pities them. Since Karl Oskar is an honest, 'pure' man of the soil the implication is that he is an innocent intruder, yet on the collective level a sense of guilt is the source of the settlers' fear and consequently hatred of the Indians (*SBTV* 157-8). Karl Oskar eventually realises that he too is an invader, and that his new home was not built on virgin soil but on land seized from others.

A landscape feature that appears from the second volume onwards, the sandstone rock formation near Chisago Lake called The Indian Head, is used as a foreboding image for the downfall of the Indian people. It demonstrates the interplay between landscape and the people inhabiting it. Robert, disillusioned with the American dream and envious of the Indian man's refusal to enslave himself to hard work, notices already in *Nybyggarna* how the Indian Head mourns the destructive changes brought about by white men. During the Sioux revolt the Indian Head 'blev mäktigare och kastade vidare fält av skugga omkring sig. Indianen av sten rätade trotsigt och stolt sin nacke och höjde sin grönskande hjässa högre mot himlen. Det starka solskenet gav stenpannan en röd glans som ingen förr har sett.' (*SBTV* 158)

The Indians are depicted as extremely brutal although their frustration is justified. There is something both condescending and romanticising in portraying 'primitive' people fighting so fiercely for a cause they cannot fight for in a 'civilised' manner. A comment made by Clive Bush in his study of American consciousness neatly sums up Moberg's ambiguity on the issue of expulsion: "'Ignorant' of the white man's relationship to nature which excluded all values except those of exploitation, the Indian found himself simultaneously praised for his own relationship with nature and removed from the scene."⁶³ Shedding tears of stone the Indian Head mourns his people's capitulation, and Moberg clearly mourns with him. But towards the end of the novel he expresses a fatalistic attitude to the mutual atrocities, which suggests that the settlers should not be laden with the burden of guilt: 'Så utplånar ett folk ett annat från jordens yta, och jorden diar de dödas blod och grönskar och blommor som för de levande.' (SBTV 200)

Bible and Myth in the Emigrant Epic

'An atheist from his youth,' writes Holmes, 'Moberg constantly employs biblical language and allusion, and reveals a remarkable insight into, and compassion for, naively pious Christians.'⁶⁴ Moberg himself addressed the issue in an interview in 1959:

'Jag var kristen till mitt sjuttonde år, så sögs jag in i arbetarradikalismen och allt det där. Följaktligen var jag i beråd huruvida man kan skildra en kristen människa när man inte är kristen själv. Jag har funderat mycket över det. Tänkte också ibland att det kanske var bra, kunde bli för sötaktigt annars. Det fanns andra svårigheter också, att inte göra en kristen människa för enfäldig, det behöver hon alls inte vara. När Kristina till synes resignerar i det nya landet? Det som sker i en roman måste ske med inre nödvändighet. Jag kunde inte se någon annan lösning för henne – hon såg inte Sveriges land inom räckhåll, då fanns bara ett, *himmelens land*.'⁶⁵

Despite his empathetic portrayal of faithful Christians it is clear that Moberg was critical of religiously motivated emigration. The extreme case of Erik Janson, mentioned on several occasions in the novel, is an example of the evils associated with biblically-inspired colonisation ventures: '– Janson sa, att han byggde ett nytt Jerusalem [...] Men han grundade ett nytt helvete.' (Inv. 27) Moberg distances himself from the erroneous analogy between the New World and biblical places such

as the Promised Land or the Heavenly Jerusalem, although, as we shall see, the Bible provided an invaluable source of imagery for him as well as his characters. This reluctance to accept religion as an incentive for emigration – or indeed as a tool for understanding the process of emigration/immigration – was criticised in a rather unusual article written from a Christian perspective. In “Religious Motifs in ‘The Emigrants’”, Paul Elmen refutes Moberg’s claim to religious insight and argues that his secular worldview (and his general anti-religious stance) prevented him from giving a *realistic* picture of the emigrants’ image of the longed-for place, which was based almost exclusively on biblical descriptions.⁶⁶ Elmen acknowledges, though, that spiritual ruminations are concentrated in Kristina, which means that the religious viewpoint is not altogether overlooked. This, however, makes Kristina a unique rather than a typical character.⁶⁷

Whether Moberg’s insight into the religious mind is convincing or not will be left for the experts in the field to decide. What is clear, though, is that the Bible was a major *literary* source of influence on the emigrant epic. Moberg himself has declared that ‘den störste epikern i världslitteraturen är författaren till Bibelns Moseböcker, och han har ännu inte fått någon jämnogod medtävlare.’⁶⁸ As noted in earlier chapters, in many authors the theme of migration elicits a near-instinctive desire to draw parallels with the *Exodus* narrative, and Moberg is no exception. Perhaps unconsciously he sought to compete with this ‘greatest of epic poets’. In *Utvandrarna*, for instance, like a biblical scribe he presents the reader with names, genealogies, figures and dates. This gives his text a certain authority which is typical of a textbook, but which also reflects the relationship of the believer to the Bible. It would, of course, be wrong to view the emigrant epic as an Old Testament pastiche. Moberg has claimed that writing an epic requires ‘korthet, koncentration och ordbegränsning’,⁶⁹ while it is clear that the tetralogy, which is by no means a concise and concentrated text, also has a modern, specific (*i.e.* Swedish) agenda. The wealth of details concerning agricultural implements and methods, customs, clothing and detailed landscape and weather descriptions all add a layer of specification to an otherwise universal and timeless story-line. In *Utvandrarna* there is also a rare reference to Vikings in America: ‘Närmare tusen år hade nu förflutit sedan folket i denna bygd i samlad

skara begav sig över havet väster ut.' (*Utv.* 215) But whereas the first expedition was martial, the second one is peaceful, the tools used for combat in the first one will now be used for tilling the land. The Vikings' very different interpretation of exploration means that at least from the characters' point of view identification with biblical figures is more convenient.

A considerable number of biblical characters are referred to, directly and indirectly, in the novel's four volumes. Many, such as Abraham and Job, are alluded to in connection with Danjel. Holmes also notes the resemblance between the story of Cain and Abel and the relationship between Karl-Oskar and Robert.⁷⁰ One is a tiller of the land and the other a restless shepherd. Other biblical stories referred to include the Flood and the Ark, Abraham's journey from Haran to the Promised Land, the Tempest Stilled – (Matthew 8:23-27) and of course the Exodus in *Utvandrarna*;⁷¹ The Nativity in *Invandrarna*⁷² and the twelve apostles and the test of Abraham's faith (*Genesis* 22:2-17) in *Nybyggarna*. This last example shows that Moberg's use of biblical allusions is not only intended to evoke familiar images in his readers but also to convey his own message, which occasionally contradicts the biblical one. In order to save his son Johan during a violent snowstorm Karl Oskar, resourceful and defiant of fate, slaughters his indispensable ox and places the child in the ox's abdomen to keep him warm (*Nyb.* 132-144). Although there are some parallels with Abraham's test of faith when he is ordered to sacrifice his son Isaac, in America it is nature itself that demands sacrifices. By changing the role of the sacrificial animal in the plot Moberg highlights the patriarch Karl Oskar's defiant (as opposed to Abraham's obedient) relationship with God.

We shall now examine some of the dominant biblical images more closely. The drought that precedes Karl Oskar's decision to emigrate is described as a negative image of the Flood that was sent to purify the earth, only this time it seems that no Noah will be spared to generate a new human race (*Utv.* 80). The imagery is appropriate since later descriptions of the Atlantic crossing are reminiscent of the story of the Ark,⁷³ but also somewhat enigmatic since Karl Oskar and his family are in fact 'chosen' to sow the seeds of a new Swedish-American race. The way in which

Moberg projects the story of Abraham's journey to the Promised Land is also crucial to the understanding of the author's attitude to emigration. When Danjel comes to the conclusion, in the form of a revelation, that he must emigrate and establish a community modelled on the principles of the primitive church (*Utv.* 292-294), he turns to Karl Oskar with the words from *Genesis* 12:1: 'Now the Lord said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee.' If he is an Abraham, then surely Karl Oskar has no role to play in this re-enactment. By asking Karl Oskar to join him he acknowledges that his religious fervour is not enough, and that the company of a down-to-earth farmer is needed if the venture is to succeed. Alternatively, and *Utvandrarna's* three sequels confirm this to a large extent, it is Karl Oskar who is the genuine Abraham figure, not Danjel.

As noted, the most obvious biblical prototype referred to, mainly indirectly, is the story of the Exodus, although, as suggested earlier, Moberg is also drawn to the comparison of the pioneer immigrants to creation-gods. Hermann Pálsson's observations on the parallels between the colonisation of Iceland and the Israelite conquest of Canaan in *Landnámabók*, which are also parallels with a creation story (see p. 59 above), seem appropriate for Moberg's novel as well. It must however be pointed out that whereas the Exodus story, although universal in theme, is a specific narrative within the context of specific religions, creation stories appear in all mythological cycles and can consequently appear in a 'new' mythology – that of the American West. The way in which these two central myths – the Exodus and the Creation, here presented in this reverse order – are treated in the emigrant epic is analysed in the following.

Generally, all that is associated with pre-Exodus events – the Fall, the Flood and the enslavement in Egypt – can be used as a metaphor for life in the Old World. Although the dean, Brusander, accuses Karl Oskar of materialism, there is in fact a clear spiritual side to the dream of the Promised Land. Freedom is a modern concept and for the established clergy it is associated with moral decay. But Freedom is also an important Biblical theme. In the Old Testament freedom from slavery is a central

feature, as freedom from Evil and Salvation from damnation is in the New Testament. Moving to the 'new land' can therefore be understood as obeying God's commandment (*Utv.* 6), but the word 'bud' can have a secular connotation as well. This is also true of the terms used to describe America: 'Det nya landet [...] öppnade sig för dem som åstundade en frihet som de saknade i hemroten. Och hos de jordlösa, de skuldsatta, de betryckta, de missföfnöjda uppväcktes utflyttningshågen.' (*Utv.* 6); 'Till Nya världen utflyttade alla de som i hemlandet var arma och betryckta' (*Utv.* 66); 'Men långt borta [...] låg Nya världen, som var nyss upptäckt och befolkad. Nya världen var ung och färsk och full av rikedomar och härligheter av alla upptänkeliga slag.' (*Utv.* 65) These descriptions of the newly-discovered continent are at the same time reminiscent of biblical formulations: 'I have surely seen the affliction of my people which *are* in Egypt [...] for I know their sorrows; And I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land unto a good land and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey' (*Exodus* 3:7-8).⁷⁴ The narrator's awareness of his characters' 'sorrows' is somewhat similar to God's, and by telling their story empathetically the text is imitating the act of deliverance.

Although the parallels with the Exodus story are obvious, there are in fact only few direct references to the biblical text. One of the few exceptions appears in the first volume: 'Briggen *Charlottas* passagerare skådade ut över en tom och öde vattentrakt, lika stor och dryg som den som Israels barn genomtågade, när de sökte sig fram till Gudslöftets land. Utvandrarerna var en seglande karavan; deras skepp var den gungande kamelen, som bar dem över denna ofruktbara och tomma öken, denna vattnets vida trakt, som kallades Atlantiska Oceanen.' (*Utv.* 398) Here the biblical imagery is used to emphasise the emigrants' discomfort (see comments on the ocean/prairie motif on pp.126 and 149 above), rather than to foretell the triumphant outcome of their journey, but upon arrival in America one of the immigrants' first experiences is sweet milk and wheat rolls (*Inv.* 42-43). Since hunger is a concrete push factor it is an issue that has to be addressed on the material level, and it is on the material level that promises associated with the New World are fulfilled. However, as milk, wheat and the big red apple Kristina bites into in Castle Garden (*Inv.* 45)

also have symbolic meanings, the biblical associations may also be read as a foreboding, or as expressions of the author's scepticism towards the possibility of finding one's Promised Land. Material abundance will play a significant role in what Kristina perceives as the immigrants' spiritual decline; and the apple will play a symbolic part in her death.

From a theological point of view it may be argued that the Exodus metaphor is only used 'correctly' when applied to those emigrants who seek liberation (from oppression). The hungry, those who emigrate for material reasons, bear a greater resemblance to the Israelites' movement *away* from the Promised Land, into a temporary haven in Goshen, which becomes a prolonged exile. That some of Moberg's characters, and most prominently Kristina, do not experience immigration as a homecoming suggests that the references to the Exodus story may be read as an attempt to expose the fallacy of the American Dream. In other words, the characters want to believe they are on the way to the Promised Land but the author knows that America can, at best, be their Goshen. On the other hand, references to the Exodus accentuate the momentous and heroic aspects of emigration, and are linked to notions about collective (or national) achievements.

Once in America the 'homecoming' imagery is replaced with references to the process of creation: 'De fick begynna från början [...] de fick leva vid jorden som den förste åkermannen och hans kvinna' (*Utv.* 379). This theme appears repeatedly in *Invandrarna*, of which landscape and nature descriptions make up a large part. These descriptions have a textbook quality, but they also reflect the characters' perceptions of the world around them. Whereas in *Utvandrarna* attributing all natural phenomena to God seemed to be an attempt at understanding the characters, in *Invandrarna* this also serves to balance the dry, 'scientific' tone. Moberg has no sympathy for organised, dogmatic religion, but he is fond of crediting the Creator with the variety of climates, animals, soils, metals etc. found in the world. The strict and unjust God of the first volume has become an imaginative 'Skapare' in the second. Through these descriptions Moberg also expresses his enthusiasm for the new land, although

his initial impression of America, and especially of the Midwest, was thoroughly negative.⁷⁵

Although Moberg acknowledges the land's former existence as the Indians' rightful habitat, he is excited by the prospect of taming the wilderness. Until the Sioux uprising, and despite occasional encounters with Indians, the settlers view the landscape as chaos waiting for a creator: 'Hög och klar välvde sig skyn över de vilda marker, där invandrarna grundade sitt nya rike. Den vida horisonten i ett land som utbredde sig utan gränser eggade deras håg och skaparlust: Allt skulle bliva nytt.' (Nyb.10) A careful reading of this sentence does however suggest that Moberg's religious allusions embody the ambiguity of the whole venture. Whereas creation implies making something out of nothing, references to a 'new kingdom' suggest the destruction of something before the emergence of something new. Yet, despite Kristina's reservations concerning Karl Oskar's claim to be a creator, Moberg gives him all the credit for transforming the wilderness into a flowering garden (Nyb. 452).

As demonstrated, allusions to both Exodus and Creation stories entail certain ambiguities, but the two nonetheless serve the same function of adding a mythological dimension to the text. Whereas biblical references reflect the characters' outlook and are sometimes used ironically by the author, images of creation express his admiration for his characters.

Emigration as a Metaphor for Death and Regeneration

As noted in the previous chapter, in "Geography, Literature and Migration", Paul White has observed that migration in literature is often a metaphor for death. This is evident in the fates of Robert, Arvid,⁷⁶ and most prominently that of Kristina.

Moberg employs this metaphor on various levels. As an image consciously used by the characters themselves it appears already in the first volume. On their departure from Ljuder Kristina overhears her father-in-law, Nils, saying: 'Jag ska väl gå ut på bron och beskåda mina söners likfärd.' (Utv. 217) Typically, Karl Oskar reverses the metaphor: the picture of his parents as they looked that morning freezes, and they

become 'dead' in his mind long before they actually die (*Inv.* 387). Kristina, being the character most preoccupied with the notion of 'home' and 'away', is also the character most preoccupied with death. When she realises that emigration means she will never see her family or friends again, she too fears that they will seem dead to her: 'fastän de fanns kvar så skulle de inte mer finnas för henne, fastän de levde skulle de vara döda för henne.' (*Utv.* 125) After hearing Nils' remark she comes to the conclusion that as each person must die, life itself is a funeral procession (*Utv.* 220). Towards the end of her life the metaphor is again restored to its original use, as Kristina recalls being opposed to emigration: 'Att utflytta tedde sig nästan lika vådligt som att vara med i krig: Många hade stupat på utvandarnas väg.' (*SBTV* 24)

Emigration as a cause of death, and by implication as an image for death, is also suggested by the authorial voice. From the second volume onwards parallels are drawn between Robert, Kristina and the Indians. Robert dies by the Indian Head and Kristina dies during the Sioux revolt. These stories show that not only did emigration lead to these characters' early deaths, but it was also the indirect cause of death of thousands of people, who did not wish to migrate at all. Kongslien has pointed at the cyclical nature of the characters' fate – their death is usually associated with an experience from their youth – and concluded that this cyclical pattern 'viser at røtene er festa i det gamle, trass i at dei [personane] har brukt livet sitt til å byggje seg opp eit nytt tilvære i det nye.'⁷⁷ One interpretation of this statement is that emigration was a wrong step to take – an interpretation that conforms to the 'national' view of emigration as outlined in earlier chapters. However, the cyclical aspect can also indicate that death will be followed by regeneration. This is difficult to prove in Arvid and Robert's case, but the fact that Kristina's children prosper in America suggests that her sacrifice was not in vain. Indeed, White, in his above-mentioned essay, continues to say that 'an alternative metaphor for migration, less often found but present nevertheless, is that of awakening or rebirth, relating to the migrant's transition to adulthood, to modernity, or to real self-discovery'.⁷⁸ This is somewhat true of Karl Oskar, but most notably of Ulrika. Significantly, it is those characters who were perceived as morally inferior in the Old World (Ulrika, Jonas Petter, Pastor Jackson) that are transformed into better and/or respected people in the New, while

the personalities of Karl Oskar and Kristina, epitomes of Swedish decency and piety, remain almost unchanged, although their perceptions are modified according to their changing circumstances.⁷⁹

We have already seen that Moberg rejects any form of religious utopianism as an incentive for emigration. For this reason Danjel is not 'permitted' to re-establish the original apostolic community in America. Nonetheless he too experiences spiritual re-birth, and feels that God is closer to him in the New World than He ever was in the Old (*Inv.* 37). More important, though, is the secular aspect of regeneration. Just as he laments the death of Robert, Kristina and their likes, Moberg celebrates the rebirth of many other unnamed immigrants. America gave them freedom and strength, and formed them into new people (*SBTV* 6); they in return gave all their energy to building their new country.

The Feminine and Masculine Outlook

Apart from the tetralogy's impressive geographical scope and historical credibility, perhaps its most significant achievement is the portrayal of the ambiguity of the emigration experience, expressed through Karl Oskar and Kristina. Although one might expect the ambivalence to characterise the individual emigrant, Moberg – as he has done with the metaphor of death and regeneration by dividing the ambiguity of emigration *between* characters rather than *within* characters – chose to distribute the experience between husband and wife. In this way he incorporates into his story the widely accepted notion that men and women experience emigration differently. Although there is an element of superficiality in the fact that Karl Oskar never has second thoughts about immigration whereas Kristina is entirely unable to appreciate the positive sides of life in America, together they give a more convincing picture of the mental effort required of the immigrant.

The dualism that characterises this couple is expressed in their names. Karl-Oskar's is princely but worldly, Kristina's religious. Since the world they live in is a material one, Karl Oskar's material success becomes spiritual anguish for Kristina. As opposites the two also complement one another, which explains their total mutual

devotion, despite the fact that their perceptions differ so much. Kristina is bound to her native soil, and throughout the text represents attachment to home, although her understanding of the concept of home changes. This attachment inevitably makes her cautious and backward looking. As Rigmor Andersson writes, she has a 'tendens att drömma sig tillbaka, aldrig framåt.'⁸⁰ Karl Oskar, on the other hand, is an energetic risk-taker whose real attachment is to hard work on the soil and not necessarily to a particular soil. His dreams and plans are always set in the future. But, as Holmes has observed, although 'Karl Oskar has a vision of a better life for the next generation, [...] Kristina ultimately sees even further, to an everlasting heavenly paradise.'⁸¹ Andersson also notes that towards the end of his life Karl Oskar returns in his dreams to the homeland,⁸² thereby taking upon himself the 'feminine' role played by his late wife.

Robert

A popular motif in American literature, notes Lutwack, is the very different fate of two family members. While one son stays on the farm and prospers, another son goes West to prospect for gold, and is lost (literally or psychologically) forever.⁸³ The earthbound Karl Oskar and the rootless Robert represent such a pair of siblings, also reflected in the allusion, mentioned earlier, to Cain and Abel.

Robert's dream of ridding himself of all masters and his gradual resignation to his lot in life is symbolised by a diseased ear, the result of a painful blow dealt to him by Aron på Nybacken. Initially his humming ear reveals to him a possible path to freedom – it is the murmur of the ocean which calls him away from Sweden (*Utv.* 106). However, as the pain and humming never cease, it becomes evident that his ear had led him on the wrong track. The concept of 'way', both concrete and moral, is rather central in the novel. Initially, Robert's digression from the path that leads to his new employer means taking 'den orätta vägen' (*Utv.* 40) and America the land 'för den som hade avvikit från den rätta vägen' (*Utv.* 47). Gradually the gates that open on the way to America make the way itself a symbol of the struggle for freedom, if not for freedom itself. The fact that in America (as recounted in detail in *Nybyggarna's* second section, "Guld och vatten") Robert again takes the 'wrong'

way and sets out to search for gold instead of dedicating himself to agriculture, suggests that Moberg, like many of the clergy he so objects to, uses the *way* metaphor to pass moral judgement on his characters and that, by implication, his notions of right and wrong are woven into the novel's agenda. Although both brothers choose America, their different outlooks on life determine the survival of the elder and the downfall of the younger.

Robert is the first of the characters to be aware of the transformation that was taking place within the divided human space, as defined in Chapter Two, and to develop an interest in the potential for change it offered for people of his socio-economic background. The age-old spatial division has a textual reflection in the two books he owns, the Bible and *Naturläran*. But once he acquires the book *Beskrifning öfwer Nord-Amerikas Förenta Stater*, which he consults like a Christian martyr reading the gospel in secret (*Utv.* 65), the initial division between the known world and the beyond is made more complicated with the introduction of another world existing *in parallel*. Whereas the Old World is 'bräcklig och skröplig, förbrukad och ålderdomssvag' (*Utv.* 65), its inhabitants stagnated by a dull repetition of their forefathers' lives, the New World is 'ung och färsk och full av rikedomar och härligheter av all upptänkeliga slag' (*Utv.* 65), and its inhabitants likewise young and energetic. Significantly this New World is to be the home of the poor and oppressed from the Old, imitating the comforting role previously played by the Heavenly Kingdom in the lives of the less-privileged. Both Robert and Danjel, the former dreaming in secular terms of freedom, the latter in religious ones, are in their own way victims of a fallacy, of exaggerated expectations, and are therefore destined to perish in America – Danjel as an interesting character and Robert quite literally.

It is nonetheless significant that Robert, not Karl Oskar, is the one to formulate most passionately the desire for freedom, which he shares with the author. His demise is therefore so much more painful for Moberg, who seems to identify with him more than he does with Karl Oskar, although greater attention is given to the latter and his family. Robert resigns to his fate and dies by a stream, which he mistakes for Kvarnbäcken, where his journey towards freedom began, symbolically if not

concretely. His ear – his tormentor – falls silent, and as he listens to the rippling water he feels he has come home, confirming once more the water's role as a symbol of life: 'Friskt vatten ä gott. Bättre än nåenting annat' (Nyb. 225), he declares on his return from the California trail. Gold, he has discovered too late, stands for death.

Although Robert's character is more in line with the general literary presentation of immigration as tragic, and as such not particularly unusual, one might well ask why is Karl Oskar's rebellion against God's established order successful, and Robert's a failure? Why was the older brother's desire for freedom fulfilled, and the younger's, just as sincere, led to a meaningless early death? The answer perhaps lies in Moberg's own inner conflict between the moralising ideologist and the romantic poet. His heart is with Robert, but Karl Oskar is his ideal.

Epic or History Book?

Moberg's tetralogy appears to have a clear spatial and temporal movement, from Småland in the 1840s to Minnesota in 1890. Yet, although there are only few flashbacks and not a single physical journey back to Sweden, the text is not entirely lacking in a cyclical dimension, as Kongslien notes in an article titled "Emigration: The Dream of Freedom and Land – And an Existential Quest".⁸⁴ The analysis of the text has attempted to demonstrate that the cyclical element is built into the novel in two ways. Firstly, by drawing on biblical prototypes the author is creating a sense of repetition, although he often alludes to the 'unique'. Secondly, three of the novel's most important characters – Robert, Kristina and Karl Oskar – dream themselves back to their homeland before they die. They complete a full circle even if their physical journey is one-way.

Perhaps more importantly, the cyclical element is incorporated in the ideological argument for emigration. Emphasising the universal and timeless features of emigration, including the negative ones – it is after all a historical fact that human migration frequently results in the destruction of earlier lifestyles in the host country – serves precisely that purpose. Indeed this seems to be Moberg's conclusion to the moral dilemma that surrounds the colonisation of the New World. He sympathises

with the native inhabitants of the land, but sees their ruin as inevitable, especially because those who drive them out cultivate the land that they have neglected, and fulfil some kind of agrarian ideal. The immigrants too pay a price, which, perhaps not logically but at least morally, decreases their burden of guilt. They may achieve prosperity but a feeling of rootlessness will always torment them. In *Berättelser ur min levnad* Moberg writes: 'Man må omplanteras hur många gånger som helst, djupare sett utplånar man inte sitt ursprungsmärke. Man har oavslitliga rottrådar kvar i den jord, där man först vuxit.'⁸⁵ It is not entirely clear whether Moberg thinks that humans in general are not psychologically flexible enough to adapt to a new place, or whether his observation only concerns Swedes with a rural background. They are unable to find peace in another place because they are an integral part of their landscape and therefore cannot be replanted elsewhere. Such an interpretation will place Moberg at the far end of the nationalist approach to emigration, which entails viewing leaving the homeland, for whatever reason, as unacceptable. As we have seen Moberg is not critical of the emigrants themselves, but of the circumstances that led to their emigration. Rather than giving his remark an *either* national/specific *or* universal interpretation, it is possible that the intention with the emigrant epic was to tackle these two aspects simultaneously. The biblical references and the general psychological observations are linked to the latter, allusions to Swedish circumstances, values, customs and dialects to the former.

Despite reservations raised earlier concerning the psychological authenticity of the emigrant epic, its documentary value is in the eyes of most scholars and readers indisputable. For many it functions as a history book. In an essay titled "Vilhelm Moberg och vetenskapen", Olle Holmberg writes: 'Om hundra år kommer man att använda det [emigranteposet] som en källa för att få reda på under vilka villkor de tidigaste emigrantgenerationerna levde och vad sorts tankar som sysselsatte dem.'⁸⁶ Earlier an attempt was made to demonstrate the ways in which the novel appeals to the national and romantic sentiments of its readers. Holmberg's statement confirms that the need for a documentary account of Swedish emigration to America is just as strong. Hence the term 'documentary romanticism' seems appropriate for Moberg's novel, since it functions successfully on these two levels.

3. ALFRED HAUGE AND THE *CLENG PEERSON* TRILOGY

While the writings of Moberg and Lagerlöf are regarded as classics both in Sweden and world-wide, the Norwegian writer Alfred Hauge is a lesser-known figure. Although a prolific writer, Hauge belongs to the marginalised group of 20th Century authors who produce religious works in a secular world. Much of Hauge's writing has been characterised as 'beinveges kristen eksistensialisme',⁸⁷ and this Christian existentialism is indeed a dominant feature of the *Clelng Peerson* trilogy, which is probably Hauge's most popular work, although not all critics agree is his best.⁸⁸ The following discussion will examine the tension between the 'national' features of the emigrant novel as presented thus far in this study, and the more universal emphasis that is typical of a religious text. At the same time a thematic analysis of the trilogy will be presented.

In *Draumen om fridom og jord*, Kongslien notes that Hauge's text differs from Bojer, Rølvaag and Moberg's on three points: a) It is based on real historical figures; b) There is greater distance between actual events and the time they are recounted; and c) It is a first-person narrative.⁸⁹ Although Hauge's central characters are historical figures while Moberg's are fictional, both novels are based on extensive research and are abundant in details concerning the historical and practical aspects of emigration. Hauge sticks to the basic known facts about the historical Cleng Peerson, who was in no way a conventional personality. In Hauge's account, and corroborated by the historian Theodore Blegen, Peerson's incentives – mainly his dream of establishing a communitarian Norwegian colony in America – did not entirely correspond to those of the people he led. Unlike them he was neither a member of the Society of Friends (known as Quakers) nor a follower of Hans Nielsen Hauge.⁹⁰ The accuracy of some details woven into Hauge's narrative is contested, others are generally accepted as incorrect.⁹¹ Hauge, however, claims the novelist's right to move freely between fact and fabrication. The novel's chronology and many of its details are historically accurate, he maintains, 'Men tross dette er bøkene i egentlig forstand diktning.'⁹² Point b. raised by Kongslien does in fact grant him greater liberty to manoeuvre between the two poles. This ties in with point c., which suggests that one of the

reasons Hauge chose the first-person narrative is precisely the freedom it offers.

*

The first volume, *Hundevakt* (1961), tells the story of Cleng's childhood and youth at the end of the 18th Century and the beginning of the 19th, while in the background the seeds are sown for the first group emigration from Norway. It is supposedly written in 1858 in Bosque County, Texas, where Cleng finally settles. From this final stop on his lifelong journey he sends his memoirs to Anne, the Norwegian orphan he found in Milwaukee, whom he comes to regard as his own daughter. She is the addressee of his entire narrative, which both explains and accentuates the personal and confessional nature of his account. Various anecdotes concerning historical and fictional characters and events are woven into the text. These anecdotes create the fabric of the collective, a collective that may be viewed as the novel's subsidiary 'character', at the same time as they provide a colourful historical background. The people who will play a major role in the emigration itself are inserted into Cleng's memories, giving the reader a brief insight into the early lives of some of the group members. Towards the end of the volume Cleng describes how the Quakers establish themselves as a congregation, and consequently face persecution. Intolerance from both religious and civil authorities emerges as the main incentive for seeking a new home in America, although this is translated into a dream of freedom – *i.e.* a shift from negative to positive – in the portrayal of both Cleng and the majority of the immigrants.

The second volume, *Landkjenning* (1964), recounts the voyage over the Atlantic in 1825 and the first years in America. The prologue is set in the 'present', 1861, just before the outbreak of the civil war, and the volume follows events from the early 1820s, when Cleng leaves for his first expedition to America, until the mid-1830s, when he goes west to find more fertile land for settlement. He finds it in LaSalle County in Illinois, after it had been revealed to him in a dream. Since the story follows historical events, the chronological account appears to be the most suitable for Cleng's narrative, from which he diverges only once at the beginning of the volume, when his account of the preparation and departure of the emigrant-ship *Restauration* in 1825 precedes the account of his and Knud Eide's journey to

America in 1821. His narrative is abundant in references to future events, creating a build-up of expectations towards a climax – the realisation of a dream – that never occurs. The style therefore is not only true to the progression of events, but is also a reflection of Cleng's personal experience and the common human experience of swinging between hope and frustration, discovery and adjustment. Whereas *Hundevakt*'s setting is specific in regards to both topography and characters, *Landkjenning* is characterised by an interplay between the particular and the universal. Cleng emerges as the eternal migrant, but he also stands for a unique feature of the modern era, namely the 'discovery' and conquest of the New World. 'Jeg selv reiste i Cleng Peersons spor fra hav til hav i U.S.A.' writes Hauge (*Landkjenning*, 12), suggesting that the novel is a re-enactment of the adventures along that monumental trail. Although consigned to history, the recording of events presents the possibility to re-live those events, which again contributes to the timelessness dichotomy within the novel.

Ankerfeste (1966), as its title suggests, is the closing volume of the *Cleng Peerson* trilogy. It tells the story of the westward movement and the establishment of Norwegian settlements along Cleng's route. The journey comes to an end with the absorption of the immigrants in the American soil, in various settlements and within different religious denominations, and more literally with Cleng's death, and his absorption into the earth of his new homeland. The retrospective account catches up with the novel's present (1865), in which the aged and weakened Cleng performs his last task as the "Father of Norwegian Emigration" – writing the closing chapters in the story of that emigration.

As Hauge writes in his introduction to this volume, the double objective of the novel series is to bring Cleng to life and tell the story of the immigrants.⁹³ This double intention brings the individual and the collective into conflict, and provides much of the tension between Cleng and his fellow immigrants, although he is not always the *opposite* of that collective, and is often also a part of it. After several years in America the individual-collective theme acquires a different meaning. The internal squabbles among the first immigrants are put aside as they form a solid fellowship,

but assimilation in America implies the breakdown of this collective. As the members of the group adapt to a mentality that encourages the pursuit of individual happiness, they spread across the vast country. This is paralleled by a certain 'disintegration' of the text. Whereas the two previous volumes can be characterised as chronicles of historical events – with the occasional digression towards philosophical and spiritual spheres – *Ankerfeste* is far less focused. It covers a larger span, geographically and chronologically, and seems almost purposeless in its repetitive accounts of various attempts – some successful and others less so – of establishing new settlements in the expanding territory gradually being conquered. And yet, through the process of seeking land in the literal sense Cleng gradually comes closer to finding a resting place for his tormented and unsettled mind. The novel ends with a homecoming, which is both concrete and imaginary. The theme of life as a journey will be discussed in greater detail below.

As hinted so far and as the following discussion will demonstrate, emigration is a central theme in the *Cleng Peerson* trilogy, but not the *only* theme. Nonetheless, as in Moberg's work, and indeed typical of most emigrant novels, a dominant feature of Hauge's novel is the gradual progress from hardship to material well-being thanks to hard work, which at least on the surface provides good enough justification for emigration. More importantly, it provides the justification for telling the story.

Narrekappen: A Narrator Juggles with Fact and Fiction

On the rowboat that takes the immigrants over the Erie Canal towards their first settlement in Kendall by Lake Ontario, they pass the governor's float on board which a masquerade takes place to celebrate the opening of the Canal. One of the characters is wearing a fool's cap: 'den var gul og rød på farve og med bjeller' (*Landkjenning*, 206). He throws the cap to Cleng and indicates with his hands that as the group's leader he should wear it, which he does. Later that day, when it emerges that in contrast to Cleng's rosy picture, the reality of the settlement is rather dismal, the cap becomes the symbolic attribute of the man who fooled his countrymen into poverty and despair. When Cleng's deception is exposed one of the immigrants throws the cap at him and exclaims: "Det var synd å ta fra deg din rette drakt" (*Landkjenning*,

219). This episode reveals what Cleng never tries to conceal from the reader: his fertile imagination, of which he is a victim just as much as it victimises others. He does not only fool but is being fooled himself. His sister Kari once commented: “du tegnet opp for meg et prektig skilderi: et land hvor trærne lavet av frukt og jorden bar grøde i overflod. Og jeg tenkte på vår egen karrige jord og alle bratte teiger der var. *Men det tyktes meg som om du også selv ble fortryllet ved din egen beretning*” (*Landkjenning*, 102. My italics). But before expanding on Cleng the storyteller it is interesting to note that Cleng’s role in his own narrative is a reflection of the way in which Hauge perceives his role as an author. So who is the unreliable narrator?

Hauge has on several occasions observed that ‘diktaren sjølv er den løynde hovudpersonen i kvart diktverk’.⁹⁴ Later we shall examine whether this notion may explain the relative weakness of the national and collective perspective in the trilogy, but for the moment it will serve to indicate that the boundaries between Hauge’s narrative and that of Cleng are blurred. Hauge was aware that the use of historical fact does not necessarily create historical authenticity. In his essay “Ein romanserie tek form. Om Cleng Peerson-trilogien” (1966), he stresses that Cleng Peerson, although a historical figure, is in fact ‘ein dikta person’.⁹⁵ Neither does Hauge treat him as a historical figure, notes Kjetil A. Flatin in “Historisk roman – emigrantroman. Genrespørsmål i tre norske verk om utvandringen til Amerika”, but as an ‘universell mennesketype’, since ‘de sjelelige konflikter han utsettes for er ikke betinget av tiden og det historiske miljøet’.⁹⁶ Having removed the constrictive barriers of historical accuracy, Hauge, unlike Moberg who emphasises the documentary dimension, can dedicate himself to the fictional.

The novel’s three volumes have a similar structure, with a prologue and an epilogue, and twenty-six “fortellinger” – stories or tales – in between. Presenting chapters as *fortellinger* is, of course, no random choice. They remind the reader to take their contents with a pinch of salt. The slightly archaic language used in Cleng’s narrative serves a similar purpose, for although it has a certain historical ring to it, it is by no means, nor does it claim to be, an authentic reconstruction of mid-19th Century speech. Cleng Peerson has been compared to Peer Gynt, the legendary folk

personality whose tall tales compete with his own feats, as immortalised by Ibsen. Hauge talks of the historical Cleng's 'Peer Gynt-draget, Oskeladd-eigenskapene' which attracted him to the subject.⁹⁷ The mere fact of his presence at crucial moments of Scandinavian-American history, such as the founding of the first Norwegian settlement in the West, the ill-fated Beaver Creek settlement (see p. 215 below) and the Bishop Hill colony, elevates him from the level of a probable character to that of a semi-mythological hero. He is an explorer and an adventurer, and his travelling experience makes him a suitable pathfinder for his fellow countrymen. His senses are developed, he speaks foreign languages, and he is practical. In "America: Symbol of a Fresh Start", Otto F. Kraushaar writes of another famous explorer: 'Whatever virtues Columbus may have possessed, reportorial accuracy was not among them.'⁹⁸ Like him, Cleng has a weakness for a good story. This is hardly surprising when one considers the breathtaking scope of the New World, for which a provincial European struggles to find words, or, paradoxically, finds *too* many words. As Peter Conrad writes in *Imagining America*: 'In America's vast emptiness [...] there are truths to sustain any fiction.'⁹⁹

But rather than being apologetic about his weakness, Cleng's narrative can be read as a treatise in defence of human imagination. His charisma is not a product of the ideological visions he has for himself or the people he leads, but of his skills as a storyteller. The *story*, the subjective human experience, takes precedence over historical fact. Although far more practical than his fellow-immigrants, and far less pious, Cleng possesses an appreciation of the spiritual and the aesthetic, which they seem to lack. While they seek to live a simple life of faith and diligence they often neglect to see the beauty of the world, which they can only perceive in trite scriptural formulations. Cleng, on the other hand, comes across as the individualistic poet of life. Once he 'conquers' a place he loses all interest in it, his restlessness and curiosity pull him towards new landscapes. These landscapes are concrete, but their attraction is their power to evoke new – or renewed – visions, which are ultimately the driving force behind any mass movement, or indeed any individual: 'Den mann hvis verden var fattig på drømmer og syner,' declares Cleng, 'han vil ved veis ende se tilbake på sine dager som når man ser ned i en tom brønn.' (*Landkjenning*, 15)

Throughout his life Cleng chastises himself for his deficient righteousness and believes his frequent deviation from the truth is to blame. Towards the end of his life, however, the seemingly irreconcilable *fantasy* and *piety* meet in John Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress*, an influential text in Cleng's old age. His praise of Bunyan indirectly suggests that he has learnt to accept his own weakness as a virtue: 'Jeg har det slik for meg at denne John Bunyan var en stor fabulator og dertil en from mann, og begge deler er vel dyder vi ikke burde vanakte.' (*Ankerfeste*, 332)

Life as a Journey: In Pursuit of Gnosis

Whereas Moberg is interested in the details of the immigrants' daily life and their socio-political environment, Hauge pays more attention to atmosphere. This atmosphere is of course determined by concrete factors like war, famine and disease, but just as much by various religious doctrines, both in Norway and more notably in the United States. In an essay titled "Diktning og visjon", Odd-Inge Schröder quotes Hauge as saying that part of his role as a writer is pedagogical, and that he feels a need to 'veilede og opplyse'.¹⁰⁰ Unlike Moberg's epic and other texts discussed in Chapter Three,¹⁰¹ the didactic effort is not aimed at arousing the reader's national, political or historical awareness, but rather his or her spiritual curiosity. In the following the dominant themes of mobility and restlessness in *Cleng Peerson* will be discussed and linked to the novel's underlying theme, termed by Kongslien as the 'Existential Quest'.¹⁰²

Although the trilogy's three titles suggest movement towards stability, the fact that all three are maritime terms also implies that the movement is infinite. In the Romantic lexicon a vessel was frequently used as an image for 'mysterious longing for voyages to uncharted regions that may be geographic, spiritual, or both', as Robert Rosenblum writes in *Modern Painting and the Northern Romantic Tradition*. Simultaneously, prominent Romantic painters like Caspar David Friedrich would sometimes use the ship as 'a symbol of human destiny'.¹⁰³ Perhaps even more common was the notion, that the *journey* itself is the most appropriate metaphor for life. All three interpretations are applicable to Hauge's trilogy, in which the theme of

the journey operates on three levels: the historical journey, Cleng's journey through life, and the reader's journey through Cleng Peerson, a journey undoubtedly intended to reveal something to the reader. Nonetheless, Hauge does not neglect the Scandinavian emigrant novel's typical preoccupation with roots and attachment to land, and on this point Hauge's own experiences are different to those of Cleng. Unlike Moberg who as a young man considered emigration,¹⁰⁴ Hauge never wanted to leave Norway: 'Mi verd var avgrensa, men heil', he writes.¹⁰⁵ Attachment to land is demonstrated by contrasting it with Cleng's rootlessness. There is constant tension between the nomadic Cleng and the earthbound immigrants who follow him. The contrast is even more striking if one compares the stoic Karl Oskar with the excitable Cleng. While Moberg's narrative may be characterised as depicting *STABILITY* → *MOVEMENT* → *STABILITY*, or the transfer of stability from one part of the world to the other, Hauge focuses on the mobility resulting from the weakening of the fixed place's dominance as a feature of life.

As the novel progresses it gradually becomes evident that restlessness is not necessarily synonymous with aimlessness. In "Emigration: The Dream of Freedom and Land – And an Existential Quest", Kongslien writes that Hauge's trilogy, unlike most other emigrant novels, is, as hinted earlier, as much concerned with existential questions as it is with migration. The search for identity is demonstrated by Cleng's recurrent question "Hvem er jeg?", which appears already in the prologue to *Hundevakt*, but also in Hauge's accounts of the various religious sects that flourished in America in the first half of the 19th Century. The story is linear as long as it follows the progress of the Norwegian immigrants in America. 'But soon,' writes Kongslien, 'the narrative turns its attention to new groups of immigrants or people going west, and the structure of the novel becomes the repetition of a pattern – through several stories – of people searching for a new life, even a new Jerusalem or utopia. [...] A cyclical structure is established, through which is expressed a quest for meaning and identity.'¹⁰⁶ The cyclical aspect of Moberg's emigrant epic was discussed earlier. It appears that Hauge to an even greater extent was concerned with timeless and universal ideas, to which the emigrant story-line provides a frame. In *Draumen om fridom og jord* Kongslien also suggests that the novel is very much a

product of its time, preoccupied as it is with the question of identity.¹⁰⁷ This, significantly, is a search for *individual* identity, since it would be safe to claim that by the 1960s the Norwegian *collective* identity was fairly established. Thus the surface of the narrative is the story of the collective, its core is the individual's search for meaning, and their meeting point is the journey through landscapes which define both the individual and the collective, as demonstrated also in the shift from the singular to the plural pronoun: 'Her [Amerika] flakket jeg om på land og på sjø. Men også i vårt eget hjerte er der hav å seile, der er skoger å gjennomstreife og ødemarker å gå seg vill i, og der er veier som fører til vertshus eller gudshus.'¹⁰⁸

Hence Cleng's lifetime of travels is a lifetime dedicated to the pursuit of self-knowledge, or in more spiritual terms, the search for the light within, which incidentally explains why he found Quaker teachings attractive and was, at the same time, unable to find solace in them.¹⁰⁹ Already as a small child Cleng sets out to find the light, which he initially believes to be an external force: 'jeg bestemte meg for å dra dit hvor solen stiger opp' (*Hundevakt*, 15). Drifting alone in a boat, without food or drink, Cleng's first voyage ends in frustration, although his reward is the happiness of being reunited with his father. This opening scene is significant because it contains all the ingredients of Cleng's adult personality: adventurousness, hope, despair, loneliness, a desire to change the here and now, and an acceptance of the necessity of going away in order to realise one's dreams. It also contains the inevitable disappointment with the inability to get 'there', or with the 'there' itself. His ordeal ends when he reaches land safely and finds berries to quench his thirst and satisfy his hunger, and then comes to the meaningful realisation of the importance of human fellowship. 'I all denne herlighet ble også mitt siste savn stillet: Gjennom halvsøvnens flimmer hørte jeg menneskestemmer' (*Hundevakt*, 18).

With the years Cleng's geographical horizons are expanding. From a boat trip in the parish in early childhood in a futile attempt to reach the sun, through a pilgrimage in the county – his secret excursion to Røldal with Sara Larsdatter in attempt to cure her dumbness – as a teenager, adventures on European rivers and seas as a young man, to the ultimate journey, embarked upon in the prime of his life: the crossing of the

Atlantic. Cleng's explanation of his restlessness, which turns his entire life into a pilgrimage of penitence, is the disrespect he showed his demented father. His journey is a self-inflicted punishment, suggesting that home (Norway) is, after all, the Paradise out of which he was driven, and America only a substitute: 'selv har jeg alltid holdt dette for den store synd, og mangen gang når jeg reiste over hav og i fremmede riker og følte meg fredløs og hjemløs hvor jeg kom, tenkte jeg på det fjerde Herrens bud, og at jeg ikke fikk ro til å bo i landet for det onde jeg hadde gjort mot min far.' (*Hundevakt*, 64) But Cleng's compulsive wanderlust does not have a single, simple explanation. His ceaseless search for freedom is attributed to his mother, who, before he leaves for America, encourages him to seek liberty and knowledge of the wide world, for she herself still dreams of 'spente seil og blånende hav' (*Hundevakt*, 323). She is Hauge's model freedom seeker because although she defies social conventions, her actions are guided by an awareness of the crucial role human companionship plays in any liberating process. Cleng inherited this insight, although he may not be conscious of it. It is the reason for his contradictory desire to be loved and to be a father figure to his people and at the same time a loner who places his independence above all else. The fact that he has no wife or family of his own suggests that he failed where his mother has succeeded. His inability to find a partner is reflected in his restlessness and his need to conquer new lands. Consequently, the truly sensuous beings in his narrative are landscapes, while women play a less important role. He is a 'Don Juan of land' – admired by others for his conquests, but not trusted.

Although exposed to almost every possible Christian sect, Cleng's friendship with the Indian Chief Shabbona brings him closest to inner enlightenment. By taking a hallucinogenic drug as part of a ritual of meeting the (unspecified) god, Cleng realises to his horror that within him god has taken the shape of Cleng. This Shabbona confirms to be the first step towards knowledge of oneself. Although a painful and disturbing experience, Cleng is comforted by the presence of his friend by his side. That inner spirituality is closely linked with love of others is corroborated once more when Cleng, now an old man, again drinks of Shabbona's potion. This time the experience is positive, and Cleng finally finds the sun: 'Den

gjennomstrømmet meg og tok meg opp i seg, men samtidig var jeg adskilt fra den og kunne betrakte den som noe utenfor meg.' Overwhelmed, he exclaims: 'Jeg skuer det ufattelige.' And Chief Shabbona replies: 'Du skuer ditt vesens innerste.' (*Ankerfeste*, 327) In the light of this sun Cleng sees his entire life, but just as bright – his own death. While parts of Cleng's vision remain cryptic, the implication is clear: the light – the essence of things – does not distinguish between life and death, and is therefore not restricted to one's temporal existence. In fact Cleng rejects the idea of linkage between bliss and place, transformed in 18th and 19th Century America to a linkage between bliss and a *concrete* place. He doubts whether Eden ever existed and comments: 'I den bibelske beretning om dette [the expulsion from the Garden] så jeg tegn på det fall og den oppreisning som kan skje i hvert menneskesinn og gjentagende i hele slektens historie.' (*Ankerfeste*, 119) Trekking across America he is witness to countless attempts to establish heavenly kingdoms on earth, attempts which he views with great scepticism. On hearing Erik Janson's grandiose plans, for instance, Cleng thinks to himself: 'Enda et nytt Jerusalem på Amerikas jord.' (*Ankerfeste*, 232) This, however, does not mean that Cleng's earthly accomplishments, particularly his achievements as a trailblazer for Norwegian immigrants, are of no value in his eyes.

On their departure from Norway, the Haugean teacher Ole Olsen Hetletvedt sings a hymn whose second verse is as follows:

*Hjælp, Gud, min Tid maa vel anvendt
fremdrages til din Ære,
og naar min Reise her er endt,
mit Hjem i Himlen være. (Landkjenning, 29)*

The concept expressed here is similar to the one formulated by Kristina in Moberg's emigrant novel. Life is a state of homelessness, a journey; one's geographical situation is therefore meaningless. This however does not necessarily express the view of most fictional immigrants, who, as the study so far has shown, have or develop strong notions about the concept of home, usually associated with the homeland. In the *Cleng Peerson* trilogy neither of the two is a dominant feature, since the novel's protagonist never presents finding a home as his primary goal. Thus

it would appear that the individual quest for the light within has replaced the collective's preoccupation with national or ethnic identity. The following four sections will however demonstrate that the 'Norwegian' viewpoint is not altogether absent from the novel.

Places and Longed-for Places

In line with the general pattern of the emigrant novel, the *Cleng Peerson* trilogy also reflects a reversal of notions concerning the longed-for place. In *Hundevakt* and *Landkjenning* America is repeatedly referred to as a (potential) Promised Land. Cleng does not reject this imagery, but is, as mentioned, critical of those who attempt to build a New Jerusalem in it. In *Ankerfeste*, Norway becomes the (lost) paradise for some of the immigrants. This feature, however, does not dominate the third volume. Cleng finds a physical home in Texas, and the other immigrants are comfortably assimilated elsewhere in the United States. Whereas many emigrant novels dedicate numerous of their post-immigration pages to homesickness and the newly-found or regained attachment to the homeland, the longed-for place in Hauge's trilogy is, and remains throughout, associated with religious rather than national values.

In the following the theme of the longed-for place and its development will be examined both in relation to the familiar native landscape and to the American 'reality'. This will be followed by a discussion on the characteristic heaven-turned-hell motif, which appears in several emigrant novels such as Nilsson-Tannér's *Det nya Eden*, Rølvaag's *I de dage* and *Riket grunnlegges* (see Chapter Three) and Lagerlöf's *Jerusalem* (see section 4 below). The section will be concluded by pointing to a rather unique feature of *Cleng Peerson* – unique, that is, to the emigrant novel as a sub-genre rather than to novels in general – and that is the questions it raises concerning the environmental impact of human mobility.

Since a significant part of the first volume is set in Norway, and a small area of it at that, the reader has plenty of opportunity to become acquainted with the landscape that forms the novel's characters. Also Moberg, as noted earlier, dedicates his first volume to Sweden, but whereas he paints a landscape of hardship, Hauge's picture of

Norway is more complex, since it is not merely intended to illustrate the various push factors. Nonetheless there are basic similarities, mostly relating to the poor quality of the soil and, as a result of that, the animosity between man and earth. True to the vertical worldview, the source of this animosity is believed to be in the heavens and not in the earth itself. This is how Cleng describes his native landscape:

‘Lengst mot sør vilt, karrig og bergfullt, slik at en prest skal ha kalt det “*landet som Herren skapte i sin vrede*”. Videre mot nord en åpen og bølgende slette hvor mil blåner inn i nye mil, men likefullt ulikt prærien på mange vis. Jorden er strødd med sten; i vest skimter man alltid hav, og alltid hei mot øst.’ (*Hundevakt*, 10)¹¹⁰

The theme of the meagre Scandinavian soil set against American fertility is an obligatory feature of practically all emigrant novels. Since it is difficult to conceal the material nature of such a push-pull factor pair, it is inevitably associated with a certain feeling of guilt.¹¹¹ The barren landscape which the emigrants are forced to leave is already in the prologue to *Hundevakt* presented in a romanticised tone:

‘Myr, lynghei og nakent berg var vår odel, og den gode jord tilmålt i knapphet. Vi lå som en grå og sulten tunge rakt ut av fjordens blå svelg. Men hvem holder ikke eget tun kjær og egen grend fager? Spør du meg i dag, Anne, så svarer jeg: Tysvær var som Gosen, frodigere enn noen farm i Bosque county!’ (*Hundevakt*, 9)

The reference to Goshen is particularly interesting. Although in the biblical story it was ‘the best of the land’ (*Genesis* 47:6), and was spared the calamities God sent upon the rest of Egypt – and is clearly used here as an image of fertility rather than an image for a location – it was nevertheless a place of *exile*. The common image of Norway as *home* and America as *away* is turned upside down. One also senses a vague feeling of betrayal associated with emigration, especially in its early days before it became a widespread phenomenon, and expressed by attributing the homeland with qualities, such as fertility, it objectively does not possess. Fertility, however, is not only an abstract notion linked with nostalgia. It has a practical side that tips the balance in favour of America, for although in his mind Tysvær is the epitome of abundance, the reality is that ‘Vi trives her [Texas], vi nordmenn; landskapet har atskillig til felles med mange strøk av Norge, men her er mer frodig, og her er varmere.’ (*Hundevakt*, 12)

While Cleng tries to paint a picture of America using her *own* colours: her landscapes, her wildlife, her changing seasons, an approach which allows him to accept the American ambiguity and diversity, comparisons with Norway are unavoidable. Apart from the obvious difference between poverty and copiousness, there is a striking difference in dimensions. The Norwegian landscape might be barren but is aesthetically pleasing thanks to its diversity (mountain ranges, seascapes etc.) and its relatively small scale. The vast American landscape is of course more varied, but due to its massive proportions appears monotonous (the endless prairie, for example). For people whose identity is forged by a perceivable and limited landscape, the apparent infinitude of America is bound to result in confusion, reflected, as *Landkjenning* and *Ankerfeste* show, in the flowering of countless religious sects. The vastness of America at the same time explains the security it provides, a feeling unknown to people in the Old World:

‘Du har sett tyfonen legge farm og prærie øde, Anne, og du har sett hagl piske hveten og gresshopper fortære grøden. Men i den del av verden hvor vi nå bor, er akrene uten ende å se til. Skjer det stor skade i én stat, kan en annen høste hundre foll. I det land dine fedre drog ut fra, er bare fjellviddene endeløse, og den dyrkede jord ligger som furer i en jettes ansikt.’ (*Hundevakt*, 232)

However, Norway, and particularly the county of Stavanger, home to the majority of the early immigrants, is not presented in negative terms, and this is not only to cover up for a sense of guilt or betrayal. The native landscape is also a source of pride:

‘Men i en fjern fortid var denne sørvestlige delen den mektigste i riket. Jorden gjemmer gravsteder fra hedenold; der finnes gullbånd og bronsesverd og romerske mynter, og på berget langs strendene er underlige tegninger risset inn: soler og skip og dyr på flukt. Og idet sagaen demrer, holder konger og høvdinger til huse her, i borger og på storgårder. Fra disse kyster drog de på vikingtokt til land langt borte, og menn av rygenes blod – for ryger hette folket som bodde der – fant Grønland, og siden Vinland som er Amerika.’ (*Hundevakt*, 9)

These descriptions serve to highlight the contrast between the splendour of the past and the wretchedness of the present, which necessitates emigration. But they also form part of the emigrants’ cultural heritage, which they bring with them as baggage, or to use the term coined by Richard Dawkins, they bring with them their *memes* along with their genes.¹¹² The reference to the Vikings indicates that voyages of discovery are a part of Norwegian tradition; those who set out to ‘re-discover’

America are therefore defending tradition, rather than breaking with it. The Viking linkage also indicates awareness of the Norwegian 'claim' to the American soil, a claim that is never explicitly discussed.

Finally it must be stressed that emigration is almost always a path taken *reluctantly*. No good Norwegian – and practically each and every immigrant in Cleng's account is precisely that – will ever want to leave the homeland unless he or she felt compelled to do so. Certainly the first group of emigrants led by Cleng were not driven by the hope of finding their longed-for place, but rather by the shortcomings of the actual place. As Cleng sails away from Norway on his first voyage to America he muses: 'Vi så landet vidt og åpent med gulnende akre og lyng i blomst. Her kunne alle bo og ha det godt, tenkte jeg, hvis ikke frihet og rett bare var ord prentet i en grunnlov, men også stod skrevet i hver manns hjerte.' (*Hundevakt*, 328) The vision of the longed-for place is neither spiritual nor utopian, grounded in the simple desire to 'ha det godt'. Nonetheless it suggests a bit of both in its simplicity, and explains Cleng's seemingly non-ambitious dreams about America (see pp. 226-28 below). More important, from a Norwegian point of view, is the indication that the emigrants are aware of their homeland's potential. As several examples discussed in the previous chapter, such as Sandbeck's *Månen lo over Ravneberget* and Holt's *Cleng Peerson og Nils med luggen* have shown, novels written in Norway after emigration became a historical fact, emphasise that the homeland has now become the Promised Land America falsely claimed to be.

*

In an essay titled "Cleng Peerson", Gudrun Hovde Gvåle raises the interesting point, that once the plot moves to America in *Landkjenning*, the narrative loses the intimacy that characterised descriptions of the homeland in the first volume. This intimacy is regained in sections that take the reader back to the Old Country.¹¹³ Since Hauge's acquaintance with America is limited, this is, of course, inevitable. *INTIMACY* and *EXOTICISM* are the two poles along which the emigrant novel places its plot and characters, and can be applied as a general characteristic of the sub-genre. As suggested in Chapter Three, most, although by no means all emigrant novels reveal a national bias. By implication, most will have a tendency to favour the

intimate. Cleng is one of very few fictional immigrants who are not intimidated by the exotic. When it comes to choosing a place to settle, though, he too is guided by the two seemingly contradictory criteria: fertility and resemblance to the native landscape.

During his first visit to America Cleng, on behalf of his friends, purchases land near Lake Ontario for the practical reason that it is the best of what America has to offer: 'skog og frodig jordbruksland, og samtidig ferskvann uendelig som havet straks utenfor dørstokken.' (*Landkjenning*, 49) This landscape might be 'American' in Cleng's eyes, but the reader will notice its similarity to the Norwegian landscape, although bigger and more fertile. The dense woods in particular will later prove to be an overwhelming obstacle in the process of land-clearing, and along with the harsh winter climate will turn Kendall into an image of all that is negative about farming in Norway. The earth around Lake Ontario is free of stones, but is filled with the enormous roots ('lik trollfingrer', *Landkjenning*, 212) of the tall trees. Unlike the immigrants, the trees are rooted in America, and come in the way of those who wish to strike roots in its soil. The trees are also obstructing, metaphorically, the wide-open view that *is* America. For this reason, Cleng chooses his own plot along the coast, where he can watch big ships sail by.

Some years later the immigrants arrive in Kendall. Settling in the new land and surviving the first winter marks the year zero in the place's history. The virgin land has been conquered – it is a fixed point in a linear history, but from this point onwards time will be perceived in a cyclical movement of birth, death, sowing and harvesting: 'Det hjul som ble satt i bevegelse ved tidenes morgen og driver frem fornyelsens og ødeleggelsens krefter, var i gang også blant oss.' (*Landkjenning*, 242) Bringing a cyclical concept of time, which is at the same time bound in a linear concept of history – because emigration is based on faith in *improvement* through *movement* – into a world where no system of time previously existed, is also a form of transferring the Old World into the New, and imposing its structures upon it. In spatial terms the shift from 'no time' to a part cyclical-part linear time zone is a shift from fixity to mobility and geographical flexibility. Thus, even a landscape that

seems alien is made more familiar by the introduction of familiar, if abstract, notions. At the same time the act of importing values implies that these values are no longer associated exclusively with one place (*i.e.* the native landscape).

Despite the relative success of the Kendall settlement, it is far from anyone's vision of 'Canaan'. Cleng therefore redefines the geographical location of the potential Promised Land, and goes west to find it. In order to turn his quest into a pilgrimage – or perhaps as a form of self-inflicted punishment – he insists on walking all the way to Illinois. But by now the reader is familiar with Cleng and knows that although guilt always forms part of his motivation, adventure-seeking remains the true driving force behind his renewed attempts to find the perfect site for a communitarian Norwegian colony. In 1930 Professor Charles Gide wrote about such ventures in *Communist and Co-operative Colonies*: 'these colonies [...] embody an indefeasible ideal – a longing that is always being born afresh for a Promised Land, into which perhaps, like Moses, man will never be permitted to enter, but which gives rise to this heroic and never-ending adventure'.¹¹⁴ Whereas the location of the Kendall colony was the choice of the inexperienced Cleng who has not yet grasped the vastness of the land and the opportunities it offers, the Fox River site in Illinois was revealed to him in a dream after he trusted his own instincts to lead him to the right spot. His dream confirms that the yardstick by which the success of a settlement is measured will always be the degree of similarity to the Norwegian ideal:

'jeg syntes jeg stod midt i en fager bygd med hvitmalte hjemmehus og store låver. [...] I det fjerne skimtet jeg en elv; lette tåker steg opp av den og vek, og solen som just brøt synsranden, la gull og liv i hver krusning og hvirvel. [...]

Og jeg fyltes av ufattelig glede, og da jeg i det samme syntes at jeg langt borte i en skoglund skimtet et kirkespir og hørte klokker ringe, begynte jeg å gråte av fryd, og jeg våknet av at jeg gråt og av klokkeklangen som fremdeles tonte meg for ørene.

Og idet jeg står opp, er morgenen omkring meg skjær som i drømmen, og for mine øyne brer seg just det landskap jeg hadde sett mens jeg sov. [...]

Men hus og gårder fantes ikke, og slett ingen kirke.

"Siden skal det komme, alt," tenkte jeg. Ja, i samme stund hadde jeg forvissningen at jeg var nådd frem til rette sted. Som Moses engang fra Nebo berg skuet inn i Kanaan, slik var det også blitt min lodd og del å finne et forjett land som mitt eget betregnte Israel skulle gis til odel og eie gjennom alle tider.' (*Landkjenning*, 340-341)

After ten years in Kendall many of the immigrants leave and move westwards to Fox River, where they establish Norway, which became the first stable Norwegian settlement in the West. In the course of time other Norwegian settlements are founded in the Midwest, mainly in Wisconsin. The area around Lake Michigan is particularly attractive for practical reasons, but not least, once again, because of its similarity to the homeland: '[den har] både i natur og klimat meget til felles med vårt gamle fedreland.' (*Ankerfeste*, 180) Nevertheless, once America becomes the mundane reality, Norway emerges as the dreamland. This is reflected in the reverse movement of letters: whereas so far America-letters with their fantastic descriptions of abundance provided the magnet that drew thousands to the New World, now – as the novel moves towards a more sober, and therefore more sombre portrayal of America – the emphasis shifts to letters *from* Norway. The physical similarity is no longer enough to convince the immigrants that they have reached their longed-for place.

Cleng, however, does not experience America as a disappointment but rather as a series of homecomings, some of them illusory, others real. Initially Fox River seems to be the final stop on his journey: 'Slev overga jeg meg til freden. Endelig hadde jeg funnet blivende sted for meg selv og dem jeg førte over havet.' (*Ankerfeste*, 30) When he is driven out of his various homes – in Kendall, in Fox River – it is not because these places stop functioning as homes, but because various determinants such as guilt, restlessness or discord force him away. But the physical journey must end somewhere, and significantly for Cleng it ends in the untamed Texan landscape. Disillusioned with the *collective*, which is at the heart of every attempt to use the Promised Land or the Heavenly Jerusalem as a prototype for social organisation, Cleng seeks the *individuality* of the Garden. In Texas he finds a paradisiacal setting yet untouched by the cultivating zeal of the white man:

'for første gang så jeg våren her i Texas. De grønne sletter blomstret, åser og bergskrenter blomstret, steppe og ørken blomstret – vi red gjennom hav av farver og duft. Jeg tenkte ved meg selv: "Enn alle dem jeg har møtt i denne verden som søkte Edens have og Paradisets uskyld og fagerdom! [...] Her kunne en fristes å slå seg for resten av sitt liv."' (*Ankerfeste*, 291)

This is his private paradise re-gained. On the very same page Cleng declares that his

ties with his fatherland exist no more, and no longer will he serve as a leader for Norwegian immigrants. True to his fickle nature he later withdraws this claim, and senses that a condition for thriving in Texas, where 'Naturen var som i Norge, bare fagrere' (*Ankerfeste*, 302), is not being alone. It can only be enjoyed if he were to have his fellow countrymen with him. Despite the stated similarity to Norway mentioned in *Ankerfeste*, a glimpse at the descriptions of the Norwegian landscape, quoted on pp. 208-9 above, is enough to realise that the cultivated Texas has very little in common with familiar Scandinavian landscapes, but is nonetheless idyllic – unlike many emigrant novels in which paradisiacal landscape descriptions are reserved for the homeland. The following quote is taken from the prologue to *Hundevakt*, which suggests that Hauge was not entirely consistent in his play on *intimacy* and *exoticism*:

'I haven gror vekster som trives under vår sydlige himmel; sol og vind leker gjemsel i kronen på en gammel ek. Lenger borte hvitner bomullen over markene, og kanskje skimter du tung kveg på vei til vanningsstedet. Ved elvebreddene vokser ville plommer og druer og pecantrær med saftige nøtter, og de fjerne høydedragene er dekket av blomster i alle farver. På jaktfeltene er det rikelig av kalkuner, ender og duer, av hare og hjort' (*Hundevakt*, 11-12).

On the other hand, it could also be an indication that one's sense of belonging is only seemingly dependent on external factors such as a familiar landscape. The place where one finds peace of mind is one's true home.

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Although the first group of immigrants suffered great hardships in America and was spared neither poverty nor disease, the fate of its members, referred to as 'pilgrims' (see pp. 222-26 below), is described in a generally optimistic tone. The atmosphere changes dramatically by the mid-1830s, with the arrival of the second group of immigrants. They represent the material push and pull factors that will dominate incentives for emigration from this point onwards. Like the first troop they are overwhelmed by the freedom, not to say anarchy, that characterised the Frontier during those years and which led to the flowering of sects, each claiming to be chosen by God to build the New Jerusalem. But whereas the emphasis was previously laid on the positive element of *construction*, it has now shifted towards the *destruction* that will accompany it: 'den ene predikant avløste den annen; de

fleste spådde verdens snarlige undergang, dog således at Herren først ville kære seg en liten skare og grunne tusenårsriket i et nytt Jerusalem som skulle reises her eller der på vårt vidstrakte kontinent.’ (*Ankerfeste*, 64)

The Doomsday atmosphere might be linked to the emerging reality of life in America. When the new group arrives in Chicago, rumours reach them that the Fox River settlement is about to perish in an epidemic of malarial fever. Fear of the epidemic is just the first in a string of disasters, including the abduction of three immigrant children by Indians, which dramatically illustrate that America is everything but the Promised Land. Possibly it is Cleng’s maturity that makes him more sensitive to the hardships that as a young and optimistic man he tended to overlook. However, it is also possible that the second group is more exposed to catastrophes because they lack the spirituality that characterised the first group. It is first and foremost material considerations that brought them to America, and they pay a high price for it. But, although the atmosphere in *Ankerfeste* is different from that of *Landkjenning*, charged as it is with a sense of impending disaster, Cleng is undeterred in his ceaseless search for suitable land for his fellow countrymen. They, however, are not as patient as the ‘pilgrims’ were, and they scold him for promising them Heaven and bringing them to Hell. Bjørn Andersen Kvelve, the most enthusiastic immigrant and therefore the most disenchanted, sums up his initial experience of America as follows: “Amerika er et forferdelsens land. Hit skulle ingen reist som eide seks fot jord i Norge. Selv eide jeg mer enn som så.” (*Ankerfeste*, 95) Later he will also call Fox River ‘dødens settlement’ (*Ankerfeste*, 106), reminiscent of Lagerlöf’s description of Jerusalem: ‘Detta är dödens och domens Jerusalem’ and ‘Jerusalem, som dödar människor.’ (*Jerusalem*, Vol. II, 75, 76. See section 4 below)

Cleng’s particular way of marking his trail – establishing Norwegian settlements along his route – increasingly resembles a trail of destruction. The settlement in Beaver Creek, formed by the second group of immigrants, is an image of the great American deception: seemingly fecund – ‘da de kom til Beaver Creek, viste dette vide stykke land en overvettes frodighet’ (*Ankerfeste*, 108) – it turns out to be dangerous marshland. The deception is literal in this case, but figurative in the

broader context of immigration. It must however be stressed, as Cleng often does, that the land itself is promising, its soil is fertile beyond comparison. Neither is it evil or vengeful, as the immigrants sometimes perceive it. Catastrophes occur when common sense and good advice are ignored. When religious zeal is the driving force behind a settlement venture, common sense plays no role at all, as Cleng sadly discovers. The essence – and therefore the fallacy – of the American brand of religious utopias is the confusion between the natural state which is Eden, in New World terms the virgin land or the wilderness, and the perfection of nature and civilisation by the Creator – the New Jerusalem, or in the New World, the ideal colony. Along these two poles mankind has to experience, endure and learn, but the settlers are impatient. The frantic American pace becomes their pace, thereby hastening their own destruction. Just as Erik Janson's notion of himself as an absolute sovereign of Bishop Hill is irreconcilable with the concept of a democratic collective, so is his vision of a man-made Eden, a vision which was shared by many sects at the time, impossible to realise. Summing up his experiences at Bishop Hill, Cleng remarks: 'kanskje har jeg endelig lært at der hvor mennesker søker å bygge paradiset på jorden, makter de aldri å gjøre annet enn et helvete ut av det.' (*Ankerfeste*, 253)

The tragedies of Beaver Creek and Bishop Hill are examples of the intensifying apocalyptic atmosphere that characterises *Ankerfeste*, but which – perhaps disappointingly from a literary point of view – culminates in partial success for the immigrants as a whole. The dramatic build-up is in fact more realistic than it first appears. The narrative, on the face of it an adventure story of almost fantastic dimensions, is at the same time a true-to-life portrayal of historical events.

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Closely linked to the theme of heaven-turned-hell is the emerging equation of civilisation with destruction. Although Romanticism favoured the untouched landscape, real fears about the future of places, both on a local and on a global scale, are not reflected in literature until the 20th Century. Such fears are the result of a growing recognition that man is responsible for the destruction of nature.¹¹⁵ This marks a dramatic reversal of roles in the relationship between man and earth, in

which man previously perceived himself as weaker and inferior. The majority of emigrant novels, written *in* or *about* the 19th Century, attempt, intentionally or unintentionally, to capture the contemporary atmosphere, an atmosphere characterised by optimism regarding man's ability to subdue the wilderness and utilise it for his own needs. Less frequently this optimism reflected faith in man's ability to establish a harmonious bond with the earth.

Whereas Moberg is full of enthusiasm for the pioneer farmer who tames the wilderness, an enthusiasm that expresses not only his own ideology but also that of Karl Oskar's contemporaries, Hauge is more ambiguous. Cleng has the unfortunate 'luck' to be the man in whose footsteps civilisation follows; while it tames the landscape, he himself seeks the wilderness:

'Ennå hender det at man treffer på flokker av hjort og villkuer og mustangs der, men sjeldnere enn før. Cleng var en villmarkens sønn, han elsket det øde land mer enn det bygde; men likevel går det slik at hvor hans fot først har trådt, der kommer mennesket alltid efter, der bygges hus og legges jernbaner; skogene viker og de ville hjorder tar på flukt mot nye gressganger.' (*Hundevakt*, 327)

Although Cleng dismisses all attempts to find a heaven on earth, he himself ends his life in the paradisiacal Bosque County. This irony relates to the broader issue of man's relationship with the environment, and how in the attempt to build a New Jerusalem the God-given paradise is destroyed. Cleng is not always aware of this contradiction. Proudly he tells of the many able men he led to Texas so that 'de skulle dyrke jorden og gjøre Bosque til det Eden som countyet fra naturens hånd var skikket til å bli.' (*Ankerfeste*, 313) Surely he must have learnt by now that Eden cannot be cultivated but must be left in its original state? Does this confusion indicate that Hauge's mixed 19th and 20th Centuries perspective has failed, or perhaps that the boundaries between author and narrator have become so blurred, that it is no longer possible to distinguish between Cleng's Romantic affectations and Hauge's ecological awareness? Such an awareness, incidentally, does not rule out the possibility that Hauge himself is the source of that Romantic sentiment. That the historical Cleng Pearson, no matter how unrepresentative of the pioneer immigrant, was not likely to view the matter as his fictional alter ego is rather certain. In *Virgin Land. The American West as Symbol and Myth* (1950), Henry Nash Smith notes, that

whereas the intelligentsia would often express scepticism and even hostility towards progress, as in Thoreau's *Walden*, it is not likely that those physically involved in pioneering were questioning their own activities. 'A romantic love of the vanishing Wild West could be no more than a self-indulgent affectation beside the triumphant official cult of progress, which meant the conquest of the wilderness by farms and towns and cities.'¹¹⁶

Finally the possibility should be raised, that the fictional Cleng's *ambivalence* towards civilisation is interpreted as *criticism* of civilisation itself only by the reader who is, in hindsight, aware of the disastrous environmental consequences of colonisation. Cleng himself is too fond of his fellow countrymen to accuse them of destruction.

The National Viewpoint: How Norwegian is the Trilogy?

In view of Hauge's religious disposition and the role religion plays in the novel (See pp. 228-32 below), it may be argued that the national element in his writing plays a secondary role. It is clear that despite his attachment to his native landscape – the geographical unit, that is, not the abstract national one – he is more concerned with universal spiritual matters. The claim that he rejects the narrow-minded preoccupation with the 'nation' is strengthened by his sarcastic "Ny song til fedrelandet", in which he recalls looking at a map of Norway in the classroom, and comments 'Eg tykte du likna mest av alt på ei ulltung sauerumpe, fedreland.'¹¹⁷

'Religiøs undertrykking som emigrasjonsårsak har ikkje nokon brei plass når ein ser på heile den skandinaviske emigrasjonshistoria, men er viktig i pionerfasen både for Norge og Sverige', notes Kongslien.¹¹⁸ The implication is that since the state church is a source of oppression in the early years of emigration, the longing for spiritual security cannot be associated with the homeland. This is partially, if not entirely true of the *Cleng Peerson* trilogy. From the emigrant novels discussed so far a certain pattern emerges regarding the unifying role traditional religious practices play within the ethnic immigrant community. Not so in Hauge's novel. Although the first few years in America are described as conforming with this pattern, in the long term

religion is the splintering force that hastens the immigrants' assimilation in American society, a society marked by pluralism, as opposed to the homogeneity of Scandinavian society. Particularly in *Ankerfeste* the theological battles and the power struggles between the various sects and denominations – Mormons, Methodists, Baptists etc. – come to the foreground. These struggles affected contemporary American society as a whole, but also within the enclosed Norwegian immigrant community Quakers, Haugeans, state-church Lutherans and converted Mormons battled to gain power. Although the pattern of settlement is still determined along ethnic divisions throughout the text, and a certain degree of ethnic affiliation is preserved, the stronger sentiment expressed in the novel is the spiritual, not the national one.

The homeland, however, is not an altogether discarded value. Once the *Restauration* sails from Stavanger and the emigrants reach the open sea, many are taken ill and two of Thomas Madland's daughters burst into tears and express a wish to return home. Their father takes over the helm and navigates the ship back to shore, where the emigrants re-discover the idyllic landscape they left only a day earlier – it does not take long to become attached to the homeland – and 'fordi det var blitt dem gitt på ny og aldeles uventet, fornam de det mer umistelig enn noensinne, og savnet overvældet dem – som når man i drømme har vært like ved å oppnå den største salighet og så brått rives ut av søvnens armer.' (*Landkjenning*, 27) Three of Madland's children in fact find it so 'umistelig' that they leave the ship and return to Stavanger. Later, the children on board the *Restauration* are taught the fourth commandment. Some confusion arises as to which is the land where their days 'may be long'. One says it is Norway, another says it is America. The Haugean teacher, Ole Hetletvedt, corrects them by telling the story of Abraham's migration from Ur to Canaan, curiously without drawing parallels to their own situation. One of the little girls asks: "Er dét America?" – og hun pekte mot horisonten hvor blå og gylne skyer tårnet seg opp lik fjerne og skjønne landskaper mot aftenen.' The teacher turns his face eastwards, and explains that America is further away, but that Eirik Raude and Leiv Eiriksson have sailed westwards many years earlier, and the latter has discovered America. "Herfra har det faret folk mot vest før oss" (*Landkjenning*, 30),

he concludes. It might well be that he chooses the closer example in order to reassure the children by stressing that the passage westward was crossed before by their fellow countrymen and is safe. It is however also possible, that despite his own piety, Hetletvedt considers instilling a national awareness in the children more important than creating a sense of participation in an event of biblical significance.

While there is never any real doubt about the industrious immigrants' chances for dramatically improving their material welfare in America, their spiritual situation is more precarious. Confronted with the anarchic atmosphere of the pioneer period and with countless religious doctrines, the fellowship based on shared spiritual principles – even if not on a uniform faith – is in danger. Initially the immigrants react to the threat by strengthening the link between themselves and national traditions. Already during the Atlantic crossing, but more noticeably after settling in Kendall, the Quaker distaste for religious ritual makes way for a nostalgic view of religious practices – now associated with home rather than with an oppressive authority. A similar process occurs in Moberg's *Invandrarna*, in which the Lutheran church becomes synonymous with 'roots' and a longing for 'home'. In *Landkjenning*, the Haugeans, who were the minority among the Quaker-oriented group, become a more dominant voice in worship, which was not essentially different from state Lutheranism, even if more emotional. After a few months in Kendall, when the immigrants discuss their freedom of worship – a dream that has now become a confusing fact of life – Daniel Rossadal says: "Så underlig det er – jeg savner kirkeklokkene."

"Og jeg savner en prest å krangle med!" sa Jakob Slogvig.' (*Landkjenning*, 230-231)

The move to Illinois marks the next step in the severing of ties with the homeland, but there, too, the process is gradual. A day after their arrival, the settlers find the name Fox River displeasing with its 'fremmedartet' ring. Some suggest giving the place a Norwegian name, 'for fremdeles hadde vårt sinn rotfeste i landet hinsides havet'. Cleng puts forwards the name *Norway*: 'det var englesk i skrivemåten og norsk efter innhold og i ordenet på det vis både gammelt og nytt.' (*Ankerfeste*, 31)

Cleng's proposal reflects his pragmatic approach; he is aware that the settlers need Norwegian contents in order to fill up the 'cultural vacuum' of the New World. At the same time he is aware of the necessity to anglicise terms and to assimilate. With time and distance, Scandinavian practices such as lighting a bonfire on Midsummer Night or singing national songs, will gradually die out or be transformed into American practices. The immigrants' language, too, becomes a combination of a local Norwegian dialect and English. Norway is rarely vilified, yet few regret leaving it: '[vi] drog oss til minnes at vi hadde levd mangen lykkelig dag i Norge. Dog var de fleste enige om at Amerikas jord og klimaat bød på fordeler i sammenligning.' (*Ankerfeste*, 135) Unlike other emigrant novels, in the *Cleng Pearson* trilogy the return to national traditions, religious and cultural, is just a phase, much shorter than the lifetimes of the first generation of immigrants. Most of them then move on to test the variety of spiritual experiences on offer, and that inevitably results in the weakening of ties with the homeland.

This experimentation, however, does not necessarily lead to happiness. Less prominent than for example in Rølvaag's tetralogy, *Cleng Pearson* also charts a process that leads some of the immigrants to associate America with material well-being *at the cost* of all other values. Although the following quote is not a typical statement, inevitably as the years go by, and as Fox River loses its Norwegian character, the longing for a home in its deeper meaning generates nostalgia:

'Hermed være sluttelig sagt at tross sluppefolkene og deres pårørende stadig la nye marker under plog, stadig fikk større hjorder av kveg og svin, bygde hus som kunne måle seg med hva de gjæveste hadde hatt i Norge, ja noen fikk dem endog rommeligere og bedre, så var få lykkelige. Og det hendte fremdeles – tyve år efter at vi hadde forlatt Norge – at så én, så hin begynte å snakke om de gode dager i gamlelandet. De hadde glemt alle fjerntliggende fortredegheter, og det svunne lå i hildring for dem som et paradis.' (*Ankerfeste*, 219)

Whereas the general trend is of assimilation, reluctant though it may be, at least two of the novel's most admirable characters stand for unwavering attachment to their original homes. The first is the founder of the Quaker congregation in Stavanger, Elias Tastad, who refuses to leave Norway 'komme fengsel eller død' (*Hundevakt*, 244), although arguably his reason for staying in Norway is purely religious and not

patriotic. The second is Cleng's brother-in-law, Cornelius Nilsen Hersdal. For him, leaving the family farm is the most painful aspect of emigration, which he perceives as a crime committed against one's ancestors and against God: "jeg frykter at skulle den dag komme da jeg sådde og slo på fremmede marker, ville jeg føle det som om hele min slekt var oppstått av gravene og fulgte meg fot for fot og anklaget meg fordi jeg ikke lenger dyrket fedrenes jord." (*Landkjenning*, 104) Although a successful farmer also in Kendall, Cornelius survives only because he managed to create an illusion that he is still in Hersdal: "I drømme er jeg fremdeles hjemme [...] når jeg drømmer, er det likesom Hersdals jorder strekker seg ut i endeløse vidder" (*Landkjenning*, 311). When his fellow immigrants prepare to move west, the prospect of being uprooted once more proves too much for Cornelius, who dies of a stroke and is buried in Kendall.

Earlier a distinction was made between the abstract national and the concrete geographical unit. However, the difference between local (or regional) and national is very difficult to determine, especially in Norway. It is therefore impossible to judge whether Elias Tastad and Cornelius Hersdal's devotion to Norway is a patriotic statement and not an expression of the basic human instinct of attachment to one's native landscape. For many, such a distinction does not exist at all, especially because once away from the homeland, the regional becomes representative of the national. Be that as it may, it is clear that Hauge takes into account his readers' expectations to find the national sentiment expressed in an emigrant novel.

Pilgrims, Not Immigrants

Whereas Moberg's America is decidedly Swedish, Hauge does not shut America out of his narrative. This does not mean that the text is free of the national bias that characterises the emigrant novel in general. Hauge dedicates very little of his account to issues such as the oppression and expulsion of the native population, or indeed any other issue that does not affect the Norwegian immigrants directly. However, his 'us' and 'them', *if it at all exists*, is not necessarily based on national/ethnic divisions but rather on the division between those who seek spiritual enlightenment – Quakers, Haugeans and later Chief Shabbona – and those dominated by temporal

preoccupations. Cleng is caught in the middle, and his central role suggests that the novel need not be perceived as a conflict between two ways of life – Norwegian *or* American, religious *or* secular – but rather as a treatise on harmonisation. In that sense, too, Hauge's work is unusual, since most emigrant novels discuss the need to make an either/or decision concerning one's identity. There is, however, one pivotal point in the convention of the emigrant novel, which Hauge does not seem to dispute, and that is the piety of the emigrants. This piety elevates them to the status of Chosen People, which explains their endurance in the face of hardship. Various comments made by Cleng throughout his account give the impression that, although he himself rejected the millennial dreams of many of his contemporaries, he often considered the Norwegian immigrants the most suitable to fulfil them.

From the beginning of *Landkjenning*, the collective of immigrants is referred to as 'pilgrims'. As people with a holy mission Cleng removes them from the specific historical context, and places them along a line of pilgrimages:

'Men var Noah selv den første pilgrim, så har visselig siden hans dager pilgrimstogene vært den røde blodstrøm gjennom denne verdens legeme, som ellers ville gått i forråtnelse. For pilgrimen har alltid vært i oppbrudd fra ødeleggelsens vederstyggelighet – la ham bære hva navn han vil –: en Abraham fra Ur, en Moses fra Egypten, eller William Penn fra England og Lars Larsen i Jeilane fra byen Stavanger i det sydvestlige Norge.' (*Landkjenning*, 20)

This is the pilgrims' own view of their fate, in which emigration is not only inevitable but also necessary if humankind is to survive. It captures the spirit of the novel, the spirit of mental and physical mobility. At the same time it conveys the sense of perpetuity. The immigrants 'trøstet seg til den Gud som var på Noahs tid, at han uforanderlig er den samme' (*Landkjenning*, 20), and therefore choose to link themselves to a chain of events that is geographically distant from them, but which they feel describes their situation better than 'local' sources and traditions, such as the Viking voyages. They are leaving Norway to find 'et nytt Kanaan' (*Landkjenning*, 22) rather than to re-discover Vinland, and by calling them 'pilgrims' the narrator adds extra weight to their mission.

Pilgrimage is usually associated with a historical or a 'known' place, imbued with

religious significance. America is on the other hand perceived as a new place, indeed one of its greatest pull factors is the fact that it lacks traditions, that it is virgin territory. How can people go on a pilgrimage to an unknown place? The naming practice that became rooted in America (and in other parts of the New World) supplies the best answer. New Amsterdam, New York, New Jersey, New Lebanon, or in many other cases dropping the designation 'New': Rochester, Kendall, Norway. All these places happen to be on a different continent, but are in fact a continuation – or a revised edition – of the old place, because they fundamentally serve the same function of providing homes for people. However, the new places are most often bigger, more fertile and more prosperous than the old ones, and this supplies the justification for creating them. The immigrants may have left their homeland seeking greater spirituality in another place, but soon after their arrival in the new place they imbue it with the spirituality they brought with them from the place they had left. In that sense they are pilgrims with a 'national' mission. However, the frequent use of the two terms 'pilgrims' and 'Canaan' conveys the idea, that their mission is on a universal level. Pilgrimage is associated with a place of spiritual significance only, while the promise associated with Canaan is of material well-being as well. Thus the combined use of 'pilgrims' and 'Canaan' creates the necessary balance between a quest for spirituality – the justification for the voyage – and the need for improved physical conditions – the indicator of its success. The material and the spiritual are in fact represented as contrasts by very few characters in Hauge's account, which again demonstrates, that true spirituality is not a negation of one's physicality.

Although Quaker principles are based on the belief that 'all Christians are believers and are born of God',¹¹⁹ first their persecution by the authorities, and later their success in a variety of ventures ranging from businesses to social reforms, led some of the Friends to see themselves as chosen by God. In the same way, the emigrants, who feel chased out of Norway, and who seek equality and freedom, are perceived by themselves and by those who observe them as elected: 'Så lenge det kunne høres, talte de ombord og de på land gjensidig trøstens ord til hverandre og minnet om at slik som herren hadde bevart Noah og hans ætt i Arken under vannflommen, således ville han atter en gang forbarme seg over sine utvalgte i et lite skip på det uendelige

osean.' (*Landkjenning*, 25) Throughout the text there are also references to the cleanliness of the Norwegian pilgrims: 'visselig [var] pilgrimene mer renferdige enn folk flest' (*Landkjenning*, 170).¹²⁰ In order to retain their purity and perform their task of establishing a godly and prosperous community, they must stay segregated. Like the Israelites whose Exodus from Egypt they are re-enacting, they wish to remain a homogeneous group. Mixing with other races is almost unthinkable, and seems to defeat the purpose of emigration, which is to limit one's social circle to the like-minded only. This attitude, however, must and does give way to greater openness. After all, successful immigration is measured according to the degree of assimilation.

Despite great resentment towards Cleng during the first weeks in Kendall, there is a general spirit of forgiveness. Thus, although a harsh winter ensues, none of the immigrants attempts to return to Norway: 'Det ble en vinter da mange drømmer gikk i grav; men også nye håp tentes i sin tid.' (*Landkjenning*, 223) The first winter in America, as Kongslien points out, is often a key-chapter in emigrant novels.¹²¹ With its 'Darwinian' harshness winter selects those who are fit to become pioneers. Needless to say the immigrants are resourceful and most of them strong in body and soul. The heroising voice is not absent from Cleng's narrative, but he is also careful to tone it down: 'Det er just slik man kan lese i de romantiske fortellinger fra pionerlivet eller se det på gamle skilderier: Over liv og virke hviler likesom en uskyld; var handling som utføres, hvert ord som tales ånder av harmoni og idyll. Men den som selv er kjent med disse vilkår innenfra, vet at billedet er bedragelig' (*Landkjenning*, 226). There is also another crucial reason for Cleng's cautious approach to the idealisation of the immigrants. When in the face of trials and tribulations individuals or collectives perceive themselves as chosen by God, especially in the case of decent people like the immigrants,¹²² it is likely that some defence mechanism is at work. While the pilgrims sense a need for a religious justification to ethnic segregation, the reality is that they can only gradually digest the diversity of new climates, new landscapes, new ways of life, new foods, new styles of clothing and... new people. 'Other' people contribute to the consolidation of the ethnically homogenous collective more than any other factor. This, of course, is a

common feature of immigration, and has nothing to do with pilgrimage. Thus the narrative talks in two seemingly conflicting voices. The one presents the characters as devout pilgrims, the other as ordinary immigrants. The meeting point of the two is language itself, since it is language that creates the illusion of holiness, and language that is the best indicator of isolation or assimilation, immigration's two polarised outcomes.

Although initially America makes the immigrants more Norwegian than ever before and their native language more precious, the meeting with new landscapes necessitates the absorption of English terms. Throughout the novel there is an increasing use of Americanisms with the progression westwards, as American terms and expressions come to fill gaps in the Norwegian language. In the third volume Norwegian is spoken less and less among the immigrants, and its disintegration is noticeable in sentences such as "Vi skilles forever" (*Ankerfeste*, 281), spoken when Cleng realises he must leave Fox River. Nonetheless there is never a suggestion that the immigrants view this process as tragic. It simply indicates that what started as a pilgrimage with purist and noble intentions has evolved into a successful but not unusual experience of immigration.

Clashing Dreams: Private Land Ownership or Communism?

While life in the Old World is based on a lineal link to *the* soil, life in the New World is a lateral expansion on *a* soil. Instead of stressing genealogy, Cleng emphasises the links within the group, which the journey forms into a close-knit collective. Fathers and sons become brothers, which is another expression of the horizontality that replaces the ancient verticality. This mental shift feeds the communitarian dream, based on the principles set by the apostles in the New Testament.¹²³ Using as evidence a letter sent by an immigrant in 1838, Blegen confirms that the historical Peerson had intended to establish a communitarian settlement of Norwegians in 1825, and was still hanging on to his ambition in 1838.¹²⁴ It is evident that Hauge, too, found the dream appealing, and incorporated it as a recurring theme in the tetralogy. Although Cleng is unofficially appointed as the immigrants' 'veirydder' and 'stifinner', he and the group never share the same vision. He never joins the

Society of Friends, and his dream of a communitarian colony, which he formulates in *Landkjenning* during his first visit to America, never receives broad support among his fellow-immigrants, whose ideal is private land ownership. There is irony, not to say an unresolved contradiction, in the fact that freedom in the New World, perceived in the Old World in spiritual terms, can only be expressed through material achievements.

But what precisely was Cleng's dream, and why was it so unappealing to his countrymen? During his first stay in America, Cleng meets Frederick Rapp, the adopted son of George Rapp, founder of Harmony, Indiana, and Energy, Pennsylvania. These colonies practised Christian communism, and aimed to lead a simple, healthy life.¹²⁵ Cleng finds the communitarian principles, also practised by some Quaker groups and a sect known as the Zoarites,¹²⁶ as well as by some non-religious groups inspired by Robert Owen,¹²⁷ appealing, and begins to dream of leading a flock of his own people to America in order to establish a Norwegian colony, based on communitarian Christian ideology. He writes to Lars Larsen in Stavanger of his plans, but Larsen warns him that not all emigrants will find these ideas so tempting. Just before the immigrants arrive in America, Cleng tries gentle persuasion, but as Larsen predicted, to no avail. Cleng's vision contains the seeds of its failure, since it is based on imposing his own wishes on others in the hope that they: 'om mulig gikk inn på å føye meg i mitt forsett så vi i fellesskap kunne bygge det kristelige og kommunistiske Eden jeg hadde drømt om.' (*Landkjenning*, 168)

Without intention Cleng will come to play the role of the Old Testament God in the lives of the immigrants. He sets up a 'plan' that will guarantee their prosperity, but is constantly let down by their disobedience. From their point of view – that of the Chosen People – he makes demands that human nature cannot meet. However, they always turn to him in times of trouble, and rely on him for guidance and assistance. This in turn rekindles his hopes of realising his vision, and in its various versions it appears time and again. Even when Cleng claims defeat and resignation, the words he uses suggest that the dream is still very much alive, for example towards the end of *Landkjenning*: 'Mine storhetsdrømmer – at jeg skulle bli som en høvding eller

konge for alle de norske, idet vi dannet en avsondret og fullkommen koloni, hvor fellesskap, vennskap og velstand rådet – alle disse drømmer lå ynkværdig i grus.’ (*Landkjenning*, 310)

Ironically, although Cleng is one of a very few among his countrymen to view the melting pot in positive terms, even he has throughout his life limited his vision to encompass Norwegians only. As for the other immigrants, they not only reject the idea of living with non-Norwegians, but also the idea of sharing their land with other Norwegians. In Larsen’s reply to Cleng’s letter he explains, that Norwegian crofters crave nothing more than owning their own land. Those who do own a farm are even less likely to want to share it with others. In his letter Larsen reveals a great deal about Norwegian mentality, and admits that the majority of those who wish to emigrate do so in the hope of improving their economic situation, which of course does not contradict their wish to secure their freedom of worship. The encounter with vast tracts of fertile land only increases the immigrants’ land hunger. Initially the Kendall settlement appears to be adequate in size, but once they begin to plan their move west, its value drops dramatically: ‘Efter vår jordlodd ville vi blitt regnet for storbønder i Vest-Norge; men slik betraktet vi oss ikke selv, for vi hadde det tilkommende i tanker, og vi så oss allerede i ånden som eiendomsbesittere på Illinois’ prærieland.’ (*Landkjenning*, 311) And Cleng’s use of the pronoun ‘vi’ is not coincidental: communitarian dreams aside, he purchases land for himself on several occasions.

Although Hauge’s sympathies lie with Cleng the ideologist, he also has great understanding for the Norwegian farmer who cannot distinguish between himself and his land. Those who do not own land are not only poor, but homeless as well, as Cleng finds out talking to a young boy in Texas: ‘En dag spurte jeg denne [...] gutten hvor han hørte hjemme, og han svarte: “We don’t live nowhere; we ain’t got no farm.”’ (*Ankerfeste*, 14)

Religion: Literary Inspiration or a Way of Life?

Alfred Hauge’s great-grandparents were Quakers and he grew up in an environment

marked by Hans Nielsen Hauge's heritage. To himself he referred as a 'pietist',¹²⁸ and his informative account of Quaker history and principles barely conceals where his sympathies lie. In *Gråstein og lengsel. Peilinger i Alfred Hauges tema og litterære landskap* (1985), Odd Kvaal Pedersen observes that in Hauge's work religion is both an oppressor and a liberator.¹²⁹ This ambiguity is conveyed in *Cleang Peerson* through religion's role as both 'troublemaker' and solution. Another way of looking at the issue would be to distinguish between organised religion and spirituality.

A close affinity between the Society of Friends, its sympathisers and Hans Nielsen Hauge's followers is maintained throughout the novel. Both movements emphasised the 'priesthood of believers' and expressed resentment towards the overbearing clergy. While Haugeans never rejected church rituals, as Quakers did, the differences are blurred, particularly because the two groups have been exposed to the intolerance of the authorities and suffered similar persecution. At this point Hauge's comment, noted earlier, that the author is the hidden main character in his writing, becomes crucial. Cleang is sympathetic to the Quaker cause, but unable to join. He is not interested in specific theological debates and is more concerned with general existential questions. Like Hauge he is attracted to people of unshakeable faith, but is too sceptical, too practical, too independent: "Du er annerledes av sinn enn disse fromme; derfor kan du ikke følge i deres spor, men du må finne dine egne veier." (He says to himself in *Hundevakt*, 241) Nonetheless, Hauge is a *religious* writer. While Moberg's ideological convictions dictated limiting the Bible's role to that of a literary inspiration and a tool – however valuable – for understanding his characters, Hauge's relationship with the Scripture is more complex. Moberg makes *allusions* to biblical stories, thereby enriching the narrative. Hauge, on the other hand, makes direct and indirect *comparisons* to biblical events, which suggests that the Bible is a living and a lived-by text for both author and characters.

First a few examples of indirect biblical imagery. Having been captured by the British navy during the Napoleonic wars, Cleang and several of his friends are taken prisoners. Descriptions of the conditions on the prison ships serve to illustrate not

just historical facts, but also the concepts of *captivity* and *freedom*, which are central in the Old Testament. It is only fitting that the Norwegians first hear of the free and egalitarian society being formed in America while held prisoners, for it is only from the depths of deprivation one begins to grasp the meaning and value of that which one is being deprived of.¹³⁰ After his escape from prison Cleng returns to Norway to find hunger and destitution of apocalyptic dimensions, with graphic images of starvation and despair. Since the novel focuses on ideological reasons for emigration, material hardship is not presented as a similarly decisive factor. In many emigrant novels the grounds for mass emigration are prepared by alluding to Jacob's reasons for moving to Egypt (*i.e.* material hardship), and the move itself is described as the Exodus *from* Egypt (*i.e.* liberation from oppression). This is not so evident in *Cleng Peerson*, although Hauge does not resist the tempting imagery associated with the Promised Land, presumably because this imagery was used by the historical figures he writes about. Cleng's despair, as he roams around the county and witnesses the suffering of his people, develops into a Moses-like sense of calling: 'under salmen [ble jeg] oppfylt av en mektig følelse, og jeg tenkte: "Hvem skal føre dem til frihet? Og finnes det mer på jorden et land som flyter av melk og honning?"' (*Hundevakt*, 234) Nonetheless it seems that Hauge was cautious in his use of the Exodus-cliché. Instead he notes the variety of push and pull factors at play, some ideological, others personal. This, it seems, is not so much in an attempt, to use Moberg's term, to 'de-heroise' his characters, but rather in genuine reverence of the *Exodus* narrative, and indeed other biblical texts, which only tolerate comparison to at appropriate moments.

On his return from his mission in America Cleng again demonstrates that the Promised Land is associated with freedom, and not just, as many others present it, with material prosperity: "enhver som elsker frihet, han ryste støvet av føttene og bryte opp fra dette Babylon! Kanaan ligger hinsides havet!" (*Landkjenning*, 91-92) In the New Testament Babylon is a figurative name for Rome, and is used as a metaphor for evil and corruption. Most likely it is in reference to the Roman persecution of the early Christians that Cleng chooses this image. But Babylon is of course also a city in Mesopotamia where the people of the world, at a time when they

only had one language, settled and arrogantly proposed to build a tower that may reach to the sky, to make their name known, 'lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth.' (*Genesis* 11:4) In punishment for their grandiose schemes, God 'confounds' their language¹³¹ and scatters them all over the world, which is a precise image of the way in which the clergy perceived emigration to America. Cleng, perhaps unintentionally, makes use of the double meaning in the Babylon image, and turns it against the clergy, by placing the responsibility for the need to emigrate on the authorities. Although the emigrants are destined to be scattered and have their language confounded, the clergy are the Babylonians who arrogantly built themselves an exclusive tower – in itself a rather fitting image of Norway in its geographical isolation.

While it seems that biblical images – such as the Ark, to which there are numerous references, and the Promised Land – are reserved for those special moments of spiritual elation, it is also possible that Cleng, who doubts his own sincerity, also doubts the validity of such images in relation to modern emigration. Thus both the Flood and the Exodus stories sometimes function as images of illusion. Soon after the decision to emigrate is taken, a ship is purchased. Like the biblical account of Noah's ark, and like Moberg's description of the emigrant-ship in *Utvandrarna*, its exact dimensions are given. The detailed description enhances the impression that the measurements and layout of decks and masts have some symbolic meaning. And indeed, on their departure, Elias Tastad compares the emigrants to Noah's family. The comparison between the *Restauration* and the Ark is an obvious one, but when referring to the story of the Flood one also assumes there is reference to the fate of those who stay behind. In the Bible the only survivors are those who board the ark, but in *Cleng Peerson* those who board the ship put their lives at peril. In other words, perhaps the whole voyage – or its destination – is an illusion? If God has not decided to put an end to 'all flesh' (*Genesis* 6:13), then sailing away to escape His wrath is unnecessary. This also puts into question the concept of the Promised Land – promised by whom to whom? It has already been indicated that Cleng is more of a poet than a prophet. Is the whole venture a misguided attempt to re-enact biblical events in the wrong circumstances? Here is how Cleng expresses his doubts:

‘De var den samme beslutning og skjebne underlagt som Israel fordum da også dette folk hadde brutt opp fra trellekår; omkring dem ørken og tomhet, langt borte et hellig sted hvor Gud Herren skulle åpenbare seg, og bak den siste hindring et forjettet land. [...] De var seg som hine bevisst å være pilgrimer på vei mot et Kana’an, og deres dristighet var større og ikke mindre, for de hadde ingen kvad eller profetier tatt i arv fra store og hellige menn. Akk nei, de støttet seg alene til Cleng Peersons ord, Gud hjelpe min sjel, og hadde jeg talt sannferdig da jeg berettet for dem om den nye verden hinsides havet?’ (*Landkjenning*, 116)

On the other hand it is evident that Cleng never doubts his fellow immigrants’ role as the Chosen People in this modern re-enactment. They *are* Noah’s family,¹³² and they are the Israelites seeking freedom in Canaan. While immigrants of many nationalities rush west to find the Garden, believing that ‘når de først nådde land hinsides sjøene, ville et overflodens Eden ligge dem åpent: trær og marker lavende av frukt, og grøde som hadde sådd seg selv; det var bare å sanke og plukke’ (*Ankerfeste*, 21), the pilgrims are possibly among the few who are really worthy of entering it. Incidentally, this vision is particularly interesting in the Scandinavian context, for although it can be traced back to biblical sources, it also refers to the Norse image of America, as told in *Eirik’s Saga*: ‘Leif [...] finally came upon lands whose existence he had never suspected. There were fields of wild wheat growing there, and vines, and among the trees there were maples.’¹³³ It must be stressed, though, that it is their piety that makes the immigrants worthy, not their ethnic or national superiority.

Cleng Peerson: An Emigrant Novel?

The above analysis has shown, that inasmuch as it is possible to define the emigrant novel as a distinctive sub-genre, *Cleng Peerson* deviates from the conventions it sets on several points, the most important of which being Cleng’s unrepresentative character. He is not a typical emigrant because his unique historical role prevents him from being one. He did not seek wealth or security, and did not experience uprooting in the same way as his fellow countrymen. As Flatin notes, ‘Fordi Cleng ikke var en typisk representant for emigrasjonen, verken historisk – det vesle vi vet om ham – eller i Hauges roman, blir selve skikkelsen umulig som et bilde på selve *emigranten*.’¹³⁴ In Flatin’s view, the novel’s weakness (particularly evident in the third volume) is due to the unsuccessful mixture of the emigrant novel, the historical novel and the ‘*sjeleroman*’, as which he believes the novel functions best. Hauge was

fascinated with the two subjects of early Norwegian emigration to America *and* Cleng Peerson. Although on the surface these two subjects are closely linked, Hauge's novel fails to establish this connection.¹³⁵ 'Genre hopping', then, is Hauge's literary sin, according to Flatin. Hauge himself seems less concerned with such definitions, and makes no clear distinctions between an 'utvandrarroman',¹³⁶ and a 'historisk roman'. He is also happy with the term 'sjeleroman'.¹³⁷

On a more positive note, Kongslien has observed, in an article titled "Immigrant Literature: Double Perspectives and Cultural Conflicts" (1996), that since the *Cleng Peerson* trilogy is concerned with the emigration of a like-minded group of people who view themselves as oppressed in the homeland, the novel 'reflects less homesickness, fewer cultural conflicts, and fewer split personalities than do Scandinavian emigrant novels in general.'¹³⁸ She however does not question the validity of *Cleng Peerson* as an emigrant novel, which leads to the suggestion that the scope for diversity within the sub-genre is greater than initially appears. The question is, to what extent do authors make use of this freedom, and just as importantly, how much deviation from the convention does the reading public allow? As many of the novels discussed so far suggest, the national novel, of which the emigrant novel is an example, does not tolerate portraying representatives of the nation in a negative light. Hauge does not deviate from this norm. Nor does he neglect the didactic aspect, which turns the emigrant novel into a history textbook recounting the achievements of one's countrymen abroad. The irony is that whereas Moberg's fictional characters are seen as authentic representatives of a specific historical phenomenon, Hauge's historical figures function better in relation to timeless existential questions.

4. SELMA LAGERLÖF'S *JERUSALEM*

In 1881 Chicago lawyer and church leader Horatio Spafford and his Norwegian-born wife Anna established the American Colony in Jerusalem. Their visit and consequent emigration to Palestine followed Mrs. Spafford's rescue from the S.S. *Ville du Havre* shipwreck, in which the couple lost their four daughters. The Colony expanded in 1896 when members of the Chicago *Svenska evangeliska kyrkan*, a Swedish

immigrant congregation led by Olof Henrik Larsson, resolved to join them in Jerusalem. Later that year thirty-eight people from Nås parish in Dalarna, among them seventeen children, followed their example and joined the Colony. Their unusual story served as inspiration for Lagerlöf's novel *Jerusalem*, published in two volumes in 1901 and 1902. In 1909 a revised edition of the novel was published. Its second volume was significantly altered, and various critics – the prominent Lagerlöf scholar Vivi Edström among them – claim that the revised edition is not the same book as the original one.¹³⁹ However, since the 1909 edition is the more widely read and known, the general reading public's impressions of the novel – and consequently understanding of Lagerlöf's views on the events it depicts – are based on that later edition. For this reason it will also be the basis for the following analysis.

Numerous books, including personal memoirs and biographies, have been written about the American Colony and the Swedish emigration to Jerusalem. Perhaps an even greater number of books and articles have been written about Lagerlöf's novel. Since the scope of this section is limited, it will not be possible to discuss or even mention the majority of these texts. There are also countless aspects *in* the novel which will not be touched upon, since emigration is not the only issue discussed in it. Edström in fact refers to the novel in the same breath as 'utvandrarepos, bonderoman, kärlekshistoria'.¹⁴⁰ The following discussion will therefore focus only on the elements in *Jerusalem* that are relevant to this study.

"Grand Exploit" or High Treason?

The story of the Nås farmers in Jerusalem had evidently not made the national headlines, and came to Lagerlöf's attention through a brief item in a local newspaper. She immediately saw its potential as a subject for a novel. It stirred a sense of national pride in her and it is not unlikely that she saw this remarkable emigration tale as the basis for a 'nationellt epos'.¹⁴¹ In 1936 Lagerlöf wrote in "Hur jag fann ett romanämne" that she viewed the Dala farmers' emigration to Jerusalem as 'ett nytt stordåd av de svenske'.¹⁴² Written so many years after the publication of the novel this statement does not help to establish Lagerlöf's *intentions* with *Jerusalem*, but it does confirm what the novel has come to be, namely a national-romantic text. In her

monograph on Lagerlöf, titled *Selma Lagerlöf*, Edström puts *Jerusalem* in its historical context. Turn of the century literature placed 'det svenska i högsätet', and *Jerusalem* is a product of this cultural atmosphere.¹⁴³ Setting the novel in Dalarna was no random choice, since its landscape was considered to be 'det svenskaste av det svenska'.¹⁴⁴ Elsewhere Edström notes that since most national-romantic texts were set in the distant past, a novel that is based on current events was somewhat unusual. With time, however, 'det allmängiltiga och tidlösa' in *Jerusalem* become more evident,¹⁴⁵ by which, one suspects, Edström is still referring to national rather than universal values. In light of these observations the distinction between regional (parish) and the national (Sweden) will in the following be purposely blurred. The novel will be examined as a 'national' novel even though its first volume is confined to a small area of Sweden and the second is set in an entirely different part of the world.

One must however remember that the novel had a 'true story' basis to it. Although there was never an attempt to produce a documentary account, initially Lagerlöf was committed to the documentary element in the plot, and researched the subject extensively – both in Jerusalem and in Nås.¹⁴⁶ She set out to the Near East late in 1899, and her impressions of the journey provide an interesting angle on the literary reconstruction of the 'foreign' location in the novel. Her recently published letters to her mother allow us a glimpse into these impressions. Lagerlöf's preconceptions about the Near East are expressed before she sets out on the journey. She promises her mother to write regularly, 'men det blir väl svårt i de vilda länderna'.¹⁴⁷ The adjective 'vild' appears regularly throughout her correspondence from the Middle East, in relation to places, but most frequently in relation to people. These are often referred to as 'infödingarna' whose sole role is to serve European visitors. Her overall impression of Egypt is positive, she finds the place tumultuous, colourful and exciting, and it seems to answer her expectations of the 'foreign' place. Parts of Egypt – the Pyramids and the Nile in particular – are described as possessing great beauty.¹⁴⁸ Her initial impression of Jerusalem also seems to have been positive. She finds it interesting rather than unpleasant: 'Man ser så mycket märkvärdigt för hvarje dag'.¹⁴⁹ In a letter dated 15 March 1900 Lagerlöf sends pictures of 'staden, som

verkligen är en af de vackraste städer man kan se med sina många hus och kupoler', especially when the weather is agreeable.¹⁵⁰

In *Topophilia*, Tuan observes that the 'visitor's evaluation of environment is essentially aesthetic. It is an outsider's view. The outsider judges by appearance, by some formal cannon of beauty. A special effort is required to empathize with the lives and values of the inhabitants.' Although, as he notes, 'The visitor is often able to perceive merits and defects in an environment that are no longer visible to the resident.'¹⁵¹ It is clear that as a tourist Lagerlöf perceives her role as entirely different to that of the novelist. As the latter she digests and analyses, and more importantly – passes judgement, on what she saw as the former. Her impressions of Jerusalem are therefore only the superficial layer in her literary presentation of the city, and will change according to the deeper meaning she attributes to the setting. It is for example significant that in her letters to her mother Lagerlöf blames the Ottoman authorities for the neglect so evident in Palestine – *i.e.* she blames an external factor – and never mentions sectarian divisions as a source of strife, although in the novel these become inseparable from the landscape, and together they generate many of the conflicts in the second volume.

Positive impressions aside, on her way back to Sweden she formulates the greatest lesson of the journey: 'Härute lär man då bergripa att vi ha det bra hemma.'¹⁵² On her return Lagerlöf visited Nås and met with the relatives of the immigrants. Although the people of Dalarna are portrayed as emblems of Swedish innocence and diligence, living in Falun Lagerlöf failed to be impressed with the local population. In a letter to Elise Malmros dated 20.10.1901 she complains of the workmen who are repairing the house she lives in: 'I alt detta märker jag något af samma slag, som jag alltid tycker fattas Dalfolket något af förmåga att ordna och leda sitt arbete, komma åstad med något i rätt tid, ingen handtverkare håller sitt ord, men jag antar att de ej precis vilja ljuga utan de kunna ej öfverskåda tid och medel.'¹⁵³ Such comments, made privately, are of course irrelevant to *Jerusalem*, which is inhabited by literary constructs rather than real people. They merely confirm what has already been suggested, that the novel has a national agenda that removes it even further from the

sphere of realism. Although her Jerusalem is presented in harsh naturalistic style, the various episodes also have a powerful symbolic significance. Clearly the juxtaposition of fertile Sweden against the barren Holy Land is intended to increase the appeal of the homeland – in the eyes of both characters and readers.

Lagerlöf's main literary influence in the description of rural life was Bjørnson. Although he too idealised the independent farmer, Lagerlöf felt that he employed neither stark realism nor exaggerated romanticisation, which is how she wanted to portray her characters in *Jerusalem*.¹⁵⁴ Norse accounts of the Norwegian settlement of Iceland were another source of inspiration.¹⁵⁵ Despite the fact that the first volume does not appear to contain any reference to a 'stordåd', a grand exploit by the emigrants – if anything the general tone is rather critical of them – Lagerlöf wrote to Bjørnson on completing that volume that her point of departure was indeed her admiration for the well-to-do farmers who left their comfortable homes to live 'ett lif fullt af försakelser i ett svårt klimat och ett fattigt land', which she sees as a 'stor och modig handling'.¹⁵⁶ Thus, until the second part of the second volume the emigrants' greatness is expressed not by what they *achieve* but by what they *relinquish*.

Jerusalem is made up of recurring images and symbols – the most central being the Holy City itself – that change their meaning according to the setting. Considering the text's preoccupation with the local and traditional, it appears rather odd to place mobility and the foreign place so centrally in the novel, although, as Edström notes, Lagerlöf 'är inte bara platsens utan färdandets diktare'.¹⁵⁷ An examination of Lagerlöf's *oeuvre* does suggest that attachment to place – specifically to her childhood home at Mårbacka – was nonetheless at the heart of her writing and her life,¹⁵⁸ which might indicate that although the novel's title plays on the religious sentiments of the characters and the readers, it is a rather ironic title.

"God's Ways" and Other Ways: Religion and Ideology

Although to a certain extent Christian beliefs play a central role in the novel – as in *Clelland Pearson* a religious awakening is the main driving force behind emigration¹⁵⁹ – religious sentiment is in fact the weaker, qualitatively if not quantitatively, of the

forces involved. Throughout the text all religious authorities are undermined: the schoolmaster, the pastor¹⁶⁰ and the charismatic lay-preacher, Hellgum, whose character is based on Olof Henrik Larsson. Conservative state-Lutheranism safeguards tradition more than it does spirituality, and lay religion is openly attacked. It is a negative and dividing force, as demonstrated through the disastrous consequences of building a mission-hall in the parish (in the chapter titled "I Sion" in the first volume). The unnamed parish is introduced as a place that, as late as the beginning of the 1880s, was unaffected by the wave of evangelistic awakenings that swept across the Western world. But the fear of laymen-led revivalism is real, and the schoolmaster resorts to military terms to express his anxiety: 'denna fästningen är illa försvarad och skulle falla vid första stöt.'¹⁶¹ The image of a 'fortress' is appropriate to denote both tradition and fear for its stability, for what is not weak does not require defending. Incidentally, later it will also be relevant for the American-Swedish Colony in Jerusalem, a fortress of sanitary sanity in the midst of a squalid and insane city. The military terminology may also be applied to 'Swedishness' itself, since in the novel it comes under threat from both evangelical sects and a foul faraway location.

The initial impression of the parish is that of total isolation, but the outside world is present in the text from the outset – in the form of emigration to America (a convenient solution for unwanted people like Brita, or people with no means to support themselves, like Ingamr's sisters). It is also present in the slowly infiltrating modern technology, while the spiritual 'New' is kept out through the efforts of the schoolmaster. But not for long. Once the authority of the schoolmaster is challenged, so is the authority of his teachings: "Skolmästarn vill förmå oss tro, att allt nytt är dåligt, så snart det rör 'läran' [...] Han vill nog, at vi ska följa nya metoder i fråga om boskapsskötsel, och han vill skaffa oss nya åkerbruksmaskiner, men vi få ingenting veta om de nya redskapen, som odlar Guds åker." (I, 117) Paradoxically, the novel's moral maxim is 'following God's ways', as formulated by Lill Ingmar (father of the novel's protagonist) while he ploughs the Ingmarssons' fields in the opening scene of the first volume, *I Dalarna*: "Vi Ingemarar behöva inte frukta människor, vi ska bara gå Guds vägar." (I, 21) The episode illustrates that the Ingmarssons, who, as Erland

Lagerroth observes in his comprehensive study of the novel, *Selma Lagerlöfs Jerusalem. Revolutionär sekterism mot fäderneärvd bondeordning* (1966), represent not only 'den egna släkten utan också den svenska bonden i allmänhet',¹⁶² are emblems of tradition and stability – values that compete with the emotional, even hysterical, religiosity that threatens the parish. In other words, when religion is associated with ancestral links and functions as a paternalistic shield, it has some 'positive' value to it. However, when it is imported and new, or to some extent feminine (the emotional aspect) – it plays a 'negative' role.

It is noteworthy that in his attempt to solve his moral dilemma – whether or not he should marry Brita, who murdered their child – Ingmar seeks guidance from his forefathers, and not directly from God, although both are situated in Heaven.¹⁶³ This form of ancestor worship can be translated into a broader bond with the 'nation' since it is also, to a certain degree, based on veneration of one's (abstract) forefathers. Thus the family and the nation emerge as the novel's 'ideals', while religion appears to be cast aside. The concept of 'att gå Guds vägar', however, is not entirely devoid of religious meaning. These 'ways', or paths, were once created by God and shown to man, and those who continue to tread them are those who keep the world in its original and intended order. Such ethical guidelines, followed by the Ingmarssons since heathen times, are based on the principles of dignity, honour and common sense, paying little attention to what other people might think or say. This disregard for public opinion is precisely what makes the Ingmarssons the rural aristocrats of the parish, since consulting public opinion is the hallmark of modern, democratic societies to which the Dalarna parish serves as a contrast.

However, things are more complicated in *Jerusalem*, because the rural idyll comes into conflict with not one but two external realities, which are in themselves seemingly contradictory. The first is modern interpretations of Christianity, personified by lay-preachers who reject traditional and authoritarian hierarchies, and the second is the backward ancient world of the Holy Land. Since the Ingmarssons stand for moral superiority their way of life emerges victorious towards the end of the novel, although the old world order does not, and cannot remain intact once

modern modes of thought have penetrated into it. Lagerlöf was not blind to the changes taking place, nor was she wholly antagonistic towards all of them – modern agricultural techniques for instance are paradoxically a tool for preserving tradition (see p. 262 below). For this reason a compromise is reached in the formation of a new ideal – a recycled rural community in an urban setting, which is simultaneously a microcosmic image of a larger and more abstract unit – the nation. Thus the Dalarna immigrants who rejected the values of their parish emerge as personifications of the very same values, but this time these values represent Sweden and not just Dalarna, as demonstrated by the names used to describe the novel's characters. While the Ingmarssons remain 'Ingmarssönerna' throughout the text, the emigrants are first referred to as 'Hellgumianerna' and later as 'Jerusalemsfararna'. Once in Palestine they are 'Dalbönderna' or simply 'bönderna', ironically defined by the occupation they no longer practice. They are also referred to as 'dalfolket', and finally as 'svenskarna', this time defined by the place they no longer inhabit, but which they are an epitome of. The *micro* has been imported to a landscape so alien that the *macro* appears in it all the more striking. This, in other words, is Lagerlöf's way of reconciling the two seemingly conflicting ideals of stability and mobility. Even if the characters have been carried away from their native landscape, the contrast with the 'foreign' landscape will enhance and glorify the specific and turn it into an emblem of the nation. In the following a closer examination of the text will attempt to trace the process in which this compromise is reached.

Jerusalem in Sweden

In the novel's opening pages the native landscape is described in terms that in most emigrant novels are reserved for America: 'Jorden [...] låg svartbrun och sken av fukt och fetma [...] Det var en lång, ganska bred dal, som var rutad av en massa gula og gulgröna sädesfält och dessutom av slagna klöverbäddar, av blommande potatisland och av små, blåblommiga linkåkrar, som översvävades av en ofantlig mängd vita fjärilar.' (I, 9-10) Since the crucial material pull-factor is absent, *Jerusalem* may not be regarded as a 'typical' emigrant novel. Instead the movement is from fertility to barrenness. Moreover, even if other parts of the world can compete with such beauty and fertility, the valley possesses a feature that makes it

both 'fullkomligt' and impossible to imitate: rising from the middle of the valley is 'en mäktig gammal bondgård' (I, 10). In several of Lagerlöf's works the farm is the centre of the plot, and *Jerusalem* is no exception. In *Selma Lagerlöfs litterära profil* Edström writes: 'Ingmarsgården är kanske rent av huvudgestalten i verket',¹⁶⁴ and as such it will compete and triumph over important monuments in Jerusalem and even with the Holy City itself. The reason for its superiority is found in the perfectly balanced combination of history, tradition and aesthetic values imbued in it and its surroundings.

The recurring motif of Jerusalem, initially an abstract concept and gradually a reality, is first introduced through Gertrud's childish play of building and destroying. First she is busy with 'att skapa till en hel socken. [...] hon ville göra det riktigt fullständigt.' (I, 59) The two words 'skapa' and 'fullständigt' seem to have a double meaning: Gertrud in her innocent play is simply *making* a model of the parish, and since it contains all the features of the parish – the church, the schoolhouse, the river and the bridge, as well as other topographical features including farms and hills – the representation of the parish is *whole*. But Gertrud the emblem of Swedish industriousness and piety is *creating* – with biblical connotations – a parish that is *complete*, or in other words, perfect. That she is the one to destroy it in order to build a Jerusalem suggests that she herself and what she stands for come under threat from external forces of change. Gertrud thinks of her creation as 'underverket' (I, 61), and the word 'vacker' appears three times in the brief description of the modelled parish, but to the pastor she explains her actions without adding any adjectives to her new venture: "det var en så vacker socken, men vi läste om Jerusalem i skolan i går, och nu har jag förstört socknen för att bygga ett Jerusalem." (I, 67-68) It is significant that in this episode the pastor is faced with a *fait accompli* – by the time he notices the child the parish has already been destroyed, confirming his own fatalistic view that 'Gud styr'. Just as important is Lagerlöf's uncompromising attitude towards the place's purity: Gertrud did not create a parish with a Jerusalem in, above or near it. Instead she destroyed the former to make room for the latter, suggesting that the parishioners will later be faced with an either/or decision. By implication Jerusalem, even as a metaphor for spiritual perfection – as indeed it is perceived by Hellgum's

followers until much later in the novel, when the plan to emigrate to the concrete Jerusalem is put forward – is an alien concept in the Dalarna landscape, and therefore from the outset associated with division and destruction. In the previous section we have seen that Cleng, too, distances himself from attempts to build a New Jerusalem. Nonetheless he accepts, unlike the narrator in *Jerusalem*, that for the believer the image of spiritual perfection will always be associated with the Holy City.

For this very reason the schoolmaster names his mission-hall ‘Sion’.¹⁶⁵ In it he preaches about the Heavenly Jerusalem and sings the hymn “Håller du ditt fönster öppet mot Jerusalem?” (I, 114), but as Lagerroth observes, in contrast to the real Zion the immigrants meet later on, the parish Zion, ‘en stor sal med ljusa väggar’ (I, 111), is ‘troskyldigt vänligt och nordiskt “blont”’.¹⁶⁶ In fact, since the parish remains unnamed throughout the novel, ‘Jerusalem’ is an appropriate designation for two places. The earthly Jerusalem is in its fixed geographical position, but the Heavenly Jerusalem has been reincarnated into a rural Swedish parish. This, however, is not the same ‘nya Jerusalem, som är nederkommet av himmelen’ (I, 171), which Karin Ingmarsdotter and her fellow Hellgumians claim to be living in after their conversion.¹⁶⁷ Their Jerusalem is not a place but a state of mind, and Karin indeed says that ‘vi lever ej mera på jorden’. (I, 171) Again the word ‘jorden’ has a double meaning, since entering Jerusalem will require giving up one’s earthly possessions, and severing ties with the land.

Although the second volume makes a mockery of the concept of a spiritual place, Lagerlöf’s Swedish landscape is not devoid of ethereal qualities. In a chapter called “De sågo himmelen öppen”, in which Stor Ingmar dies and the pastor recounts his and Stark Ingmar’s miraculous experience as young men, it becomes apparent that if there are holy locations in the text, they are nearer to home. The religious significance of this scene is enhanced by the fact that it is the pastor who presents it, without raising any doubts regarding its veracity. Although a ‘weak’ authority he is still the official representative of the tradition-bearing state church. He describes ‘en mycket vacker kväll [...] aldeles stilla och klar, en sådan, då jord och himmel byta färg, så att himmelen synes gå över i ljust grönt, och jorden är överdragen med tunna

dimmor, som ge allting ett vitt eller blåaktigt utseende.’ And as the two friends are about to cross the bridge, they see the heavens open over their heads: ‘Hela himlavalvet var draget åt sidan som ett förhänge, och de båda stodo hand i hand och sågo in i all himmelens härlighet’ (I, 75).¹⁶⁸ The Hellgumians’ error, according to Lagerlöf, is the confusion of the earthly Jerusalem with the celestial. In Sweden, the differences between heaven and earth are not as marked, as demonstrated verbally in the novel’s opening scene in which Lill Ingmar communicates with his ancestors in heaven, and visually in this one. Significantly, the colours in Sweden are cool and tranquil and correspond to what one usually perceives as heavenly. In Jerusalem the dominant colours are yellow and brown, and whereas the ‘thin mist’ (tunna dimmor) blurs distinctions in Sweden, the harsh sunlight in Palestine sharpens contrasts and forcefully separates the ground from the sky. When warm colours do appear in the Swedish landscape, they are harmonious and exhilarating, not acrid: ‘Mitt på slätten låg en stor bondgård. I samma ögonblick föll det röda solnedgångsljuset på gården, alla fönster blänkte, och de gamla taken och väggarna glänste klarröda.’ (Vol. I, 129) How different this place is to Birger Larsson’s Jerusalem, although deceptively similar! (See pp. 251-52 below) Later in the first volume there is yet another indication that Dalarna is the real, ‘golden’ place. As Hellgum surveys the view from Stark Ingmar’s cottage he sees a landscape that turns ‘grannare dag för dag. Hela marken var gul, och alla lövträd voro klart röda eller klart gula. Här och där vajade en hel lövskog, så skimrande som ett svallande hav av guld. [...] Allt var så gult och så underbart skinande, som man skulle tänka sig ett landskap på solytan.’ (I, 168) While the Holy City turns out to be an illusion, the parish remains the ‘genuine’ location.

Despite the fact that events in *Nås* form part of a global wave of awakenings in the 1880s, in a chapter titled “Den vilda jakten” Lagerlöf presents the phenomenon as local and mysterious. Whereas most characters experience that night in spiritual terms and translate their dread into religious actions, Ingmar has an awakening of a different sort, again confirming the novel’s favouring of traditional rural values: “Jag tyckte, att alla de gamla Ingmarssönerna hotade och förbannade mig, därför att jag ville bli något annat än en bonde och arbeta med annat än med skogen och jorden.’

(I, 145) In *Landkjenning*, Cornelius Hersdal expresses a similar sentiment (see p. 222 above), but whereas Cornelius is a subsidiary character, Ingmar is the main character in Lagerlöf's emigrant novel, although not an emigrant himself. This paradox raises the possibility that the main theme of the novel is not emigration, but rather the threat it – as one of many external factors – poses to the traditional rooted lifestyle in an ideal landscape. This idea is repeated in various episodes, for instance in the chapter named "Hellgum", following immediately after "Den vilda jakten". Dagson, the lay-preacher, uses images that indicate that the familiar is heaven and the foreign equals hell. Terrifying his listeners with an all-consuming inferno he then leads them to safety in a paradisiacal setting that resembles... Sweden: 'en grön plats i skogen, där allt var lugn och svalka och trygghet.' (I, 149)

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The first volume's second part opens with the chapter "L'Univers' undergång", in which the steamship L'Univers collides with a sailboat and sinks. The sinking of the steamship – incidentally, an emblem of the modern era – indirectly leads to the forming of the Colony in Jerusalem. In other words, it has serious implications for the parish, although seemingly there is no connection between the two. This is another sign of a shrinking world in which the stable, inward-looking community can no longer shut the world out. And indeed, the summons to leave the parish comes not from within, but from without. Although there is no suggestion of religious persecution, Hellgum's followers accept his call to Jerusalem because they realise that they are isolated in the parish, where they cannot hope to gain domination or see the Heavenly Jerusalem come down to earth.¹⁶⁹ Their situation is somewhat similar to that of the Stavanger Quakers' in Hauge novel. In fact it points to a more general feature of the emigrant novel: regardless of the author's attitude towards religious or social dissenters, the homeland itself must be purified of all that is atypical to allow the national ideal to appear even clearer. It must also guarantee that this ideal remains unchanged. Ironically, in many of these novels, and *Jerusalem* is no exception, the immigrants become loyal ambassadors of the country that would not tolerate them.

In preparation for hearing Hellgum's message in "Hellgums brev", Lagerlöf places

another representation of Jerusalem in the setting, this time in the form of a folk-painting of the Holy City, which is, the reader is told, over a hundred years old and has been hanging in Ingmarsgården for generations without being noticed. Unlike Gertrud's model of the city which was built on the ruins of the parish, the painting is part of Ingmarsgården's inventory – the farm *contains* "Guds heliga stad, Jerusalem", as the painting is titled, within its walls. This is undoubtedly the reason why the painting shows a Swedish rural town and not a Middle-Eastern city:

'Den föreställde en stad, innesluten av höga murar, och över murarna såg man gavlarna och takåsarna av flera hus. Somliga voro röda bondstugor med gröna torvtak, andra hade vita väggar med skiffertak liksom herrgårdsbyggnader, och andra åter hade tunga, kopparklädda torn liksom Kristine kyrka i Falun. [...] Nedom muren växte träd med tätt, mörkgrönt lövverk, och över marken flöto gnistrande små bäckar genom högt, böljande gräs.' (I, 228-9)

Although the painting has been decorated with green cowberry twigs to demonstrate it has been noticed, and that its contents have symbolic meaning for Hellgum's letter about to be read, it is as if those attending fail to see that they already are in a 'holy' place. The fresh twigs symbolise two crucial elements of the farmers' well-being which will be lost upon emigration. The first is typical and familiar features that help one define oneself in relation to the environment (in this case taken from the region's flora), and the second is water and vegetation in general. Thus, the painting adorned with cowberry twigs is perceived by those assembled as an image of their longed-for place. However, the author uses it as a warning against leaving the familiar place.¹⁷⁰

Hellgum's letter details the developments that led to the Chicago group's decision to emigrate to Palestine. Since he hints that only those elected and loved by God are worthy of making the journey, the Swedish congregation now faces its hardest moment. Hellgum indicates that he is aware that they – unlike their Swedish-American brethren – stand to lose more: "Aldrig kunna de lämna sina stora gårdar och sina goda åkrar och sina invanda sysslor." And "Aldrig skole de vilja fara till ett främmande land, där ingen förstår deras tungmål." And perhaps most importantly: "De skola ej vilja dela sina egendomar bland främlingar och bliva penninglösa som tiggare. De skola ej vilja lämna sin makt, ty de äro de främsta i sin hembygd." And what do the Americans in Jerusalem offer them in return for the great sacrifice they

are about to make? “Vi hava ej makt och ägodelar att bjuda dem, men vi bjuda dem dela Jesus’, deras frälsares, lidande.” (I, 236) The Ingmarssons’ abstract ‘Guds vägar’ is turned by Hellgum into the concrete paths on which God walked, and by expressing concern for the farmers, he is in fact pressing them to put their faith to the test, in a scene that places the narrator in direct conflict with the characters, since the list of ‘commodities’ they are about to give up represents the novel’s most prized values.

Of all those assembled in Ingmarsgården Eva Gunnarsdotter hesitates least in abandoning ‘hem och fosterjord [...] hemsocknens gröna skogar, den vänligt framglidande älven och de goda åkrarna’ (I, 237), in a description that contains the bitter irony of giving up such treasures for a foreign, arid city. But she is also the one who has the *real* revelation. The Hellgumians, as the text suggests, have given in to Hellgum’s emotional blackmail – in this scene Lagerlöf uses mainly dialogue, as if she were detaching herself from their revelation, perhaps even exposing its deceptive nature. Eva Gunnarsdotter, however, fails to hear God’s voice calling her to Jerusalem, but she senses the betrayal involved in heeding the call. She accuses the Hellgumians of selfishness and insanity, and comes to the conclusion, hinted at earlier in the text and confirmed in the second volume, that Jerusalem is hell and heaven is at home: “Det skall bli över er, som det skall regna eld och svavel. Det skall bli ni, som skall förgås. Men vi, som stanna hemma, vi ska leva!” (I, 241)

The parish, already divided since Hellgum’s first visit, is now split into two camps, represented by Ingmar and Karin. Although, as Lagerroth comments, both have the same psychological motive – the Ingmarssons’ intrinsic ‘rättfärdighetslidelse’ (which in the case of the Hellgumians becomes apparent only in Palestine) – nonetheless it is the conflict and the dialogue, not similarities between the two worldviews that is at the heart of the novel.¹⁷¹ This conflict separates brother from sister, father from son, and more symbolically – the land from its rightful owners. Hök Matts Eriksson, like Ingmar, realises that his fate binds him to his native soil. In the chapter that bears his name, his sincere attempt to sell his land and prepare for the voyage is described. From the beginning, though, there are indications that parting with the land is

impossible. If Hellgum used emotional blackmail to get his followers to consent to selling their farms, the narrator uses the same method to convince the reader that the decision was wrong. On their way to sell their land Hök Matts and his son, Gabriel, walk past fields that have just been sown and newly decorated houses, past gardens where people dig and plant. Everywhere they see people engaged in some kind of productive labour, and along with land ownership, hard physical work is confirmed as another of the novel's values. When the moment comes to sign away his farm Hök Matts must admit to himself that he is an old man 'som måste gå och bruka jorden, som måste plöja och så på samma ställe, där jag alltid har trälät och arbetat.' (I, 257-8) His attachment to his farm is so strong, that he sacrifices the nearness of his son for it. Hök Matts, who feels bound to the land given to him by God, is the antithesis to Hellgum, who does not see a link between one's native land and religion. This is because he is already an uprooted immigrant who chose first the seas and then America.

In the following chapter, "Auktionen", similar values are discussed, resulting in yet another sacrifice. This time it is Ingmar who relinquishes his love in order to gain possession of Ingmarsgården. Events are seen through the eyes of Gertrud's mother, mor Stina, who is – unaware of what is about to unfold – unable to grasp that anyone would trade the farm and its surroundings for anything else: "Kan man väl få se något vackrare [...] även om man skulle fara så långt som till Jerusalem?" (I, 259-60) Thus she herself formulates Ingmar's dilemma, and indirectly justifies his decision to marry Barbro and win Ingmarsgården. However, Lagerlöf does not equate the abandonment of the homeland with the abandonment of a loved one, and Ingmar's 'pilgrimage' in the second volume confirms that his sin against Gertrud must be atoned for. Curiously, although structurally complex in the presentation of both place and characters, the values places carry in *Jerusalem* are simplistic (with the familiar landscape representing the ideal and the foreign all that is evil), while the novel's love-plot, and the values associated with human relationships, are far more intricate.

Before leaving Sweden the Hellgumians are warned of the dangers of Palestine. In their reply they refer to the same fallacy that made America the source of so much

disillusionment in Hauge's *Cleng Peerson* trilogy, namely the desire to create a man-made paradise: 'De reste för att strida mot koppor och feber, för att bygga vägar, för att odla jorden. Guds land skulle inte längre ligga för fädot, utan de skulle förvandla det till ett paradis.' (I, 305) However, in the volume's closing chapter, "Avresan", there is yet another indication that paradise is at home. As the emigrants depart from the parish they discover not only its beauty but also their claim to it. Having sold their properties they have severed their ties with the homeland only legally. The bridge, the church, the schoolhouse – these are all theirs. But more importantly: 'De ägde väl också skönheten i det de sågo här från bron.' (I, 312) They sing a hymn – "vi få mötas en gång, vi få mötas i Eden en gång" (I, 312) – which was not randomly chosen by the author. 'Vad dalbönderna här lämnar är deras Eden', says Lagerroth.¹⁷²

The emigrant procession appears like a funeral cortege, the gloomy atmosphere is not only a foreboding, but also an expression of mourning. Adding to the drama is the mysterious cart that accompanies the procession, driven by an old, wrinkled man with a white beard whom nobody knows. By his side a familiar yet unrecognisable woman sits. Her head is covered with a black shawl – again indicating mourning – and her face concealed. Many of the emigrants believe her to be related to them, but the enigmatic woman's identity is not revealed. 'För somliga blev hon till någon, som de älskade, för andra till någon de fruktade, för de flesta var det dock så, att hon blev till någon, som de hade övergivit.' (I, 320) With her disturbing presence she becomes a personification of the beloved country, an admonishing widow formed by the emigrants' guilty conscience. As they arrive at the train station the children in the troupe – significantly, those innocent of the betrayal since they did not *choose* to leave the homeland – attempt to return home. They symbolise instinctive attachment to the native landscape, which their parents deprive them and themselves of. In simple words they convey the message that summarises the first volume as a whole: "Vi bry oss inte om att fara till Jerusalem. Vi vilja gå hem." (I, 325)

Lutwack makes an interesting observation on the political implications of place representation: 'Conservatives have evolved a formula in which rootedness stands

for civilization, social stability, traditional beauty of place; uprootedness and mobility for barbarism, radical change, universal bleakness.’¹⁷³ Although using the United States as his prime example, this statement is an appropriate description of Lagerlöf’s project in *Jerusalem*’s first volume. It would appear that from the emigrant novel’s point of view the foreign location is always ‘away’, suggesting that contrasted with the homeland all places – whether in North or South America, the Pacific or the Middle East – will be treated similarly. However, as suggested in Chapter Three (pp. 120-121), and as the following analysis will demonstrate, there are also degrees of ‘foreignness’. The greater the cultural and topographical differences – the greater the suffering these inflict upon the immigrants.

The ‘Real’ Jerusalem

The second volume of *Jerusalem, I det heliga landet*, opens with the immigrants’ arrival in Jaffa. Nothing is told of the journey, only that ‘de hade an god resa’ and that they all arrived ‘välbehållna och vid full hälsa.’¹⁷⁴ In her memoirs, the somewhat arrogantly titled *Our Jerusalem* (1950), Anna Spafford’s daughter, Bertha Spafford Vester, presents a rather different version. She claims that there was an attempt to dissuade the Nås farmers from immigrating to Palestine, since ‘some of them were old, a few were ill’.¹⁷⁵ Although her account is not considered to be wholly reliable, there is no reason to assume this detail is made up. For Lagerlöf, however, it was important to imply that the group consisted of young and healthy people, who were gradually being destroyed by the harsh landscape.

While Moberg and Hauge give a detailed account of the journey, Lagerlöf, apart from the journey’s first leg described at the end of the first volume, leaves this crucial part of emigration untouched. The reason might well be that she wished to highlight the contrasts between Sweden and Palestine by shortening to a bare minimum the ‘purgatorial’ corridor that links the two places. For Moberg and Hauge the journey is a critical phase in the formation of the collective, which also serves as preparation for the hardships ahead. As it is absent from Lagerlöf’s narrative the implication is that the collective is already well established and more significantly, that its members are entirely unprepared for the trials that await them, as the

following chapters reveal. The uneventful journey also means that the renewed encounter with dry land is not the auspicious experience it was intended to be. Considering that the spiritual significance of the place was the one and only incentive for travelling there, the first sight of the Holy Land is rather disappointing: 'Det var ingenting påfallande eller märkvärdigt med detta land, och efter första ögonkastet sade säkert var och en av bönderna till sig själv: "Tänk, att här ser så ut! Jag hade trott, att det skulle vara något helt annorlunda. Det här landet tycker jag att jag har sett många gånger förut."' (II, 8) The farmers' expectations of the Holy Land are a confused combination of longing for something known – they are all familiar with biblical place-names and the stories linked to these places – and a fantasy about a place that is totally unique; a place that justifies the effort as well as explains its own religious significance. The fictional and verbal quality of the place – in this case, as opposed to its 'reality' – is confirmed when Hellgum points out the sites the farmers have longed to see. The link between imagined and real is established (only to be broken soon afterwards): 'I detsamma som han uttalade dessa namn, märkte svenskarna något, som förut hade undgått dem. De sågo, att solen spred ett rikare sken över himlen här än i deras land, och att slätten och bergen och staden hade ett skimmer över sig av skärt och ljusblått och silvervitt, som de inte hade förmärkt annorstädes.' (II, 8)

From the outset the immigrants' reaction to finding the Holy Land in a sordid state is not to return home, but to bring home to them. They want to create something that resembles their *own* former lifestyle, rather than to re-create the *place's* former glory. In Jaffa they see that German farmers have built a village similar to 'en liten vacker svensk småstad' (II, 14), and their aspirations are directed towards a similar goal.¹⁷⁶ The wholly subjective tone of the opening scene will characterise the volume in its entirety. Events are seen and interpreted through Swedish eyes, and there is no sincere attempt to understand the place's internal logic. Sentences like the one describing the Swedes' impression of the robust Arab seamen of Jaffa are typical: 'De hade inte väntat sig, att det skulle finnas så prätigt folk i det här försummade landet.' (II, 11) Since this is characteristic of turn-of-century attitudes, one must be careful in applying the derogatory 'cultural imperialist' and 'colonialist' labels to

Lagerlöf, although a politically-correct reading of the novel in the early 21st Century places the author firmly in this tradition. In *De-scribing Empire. Post-colonialism and Textuality* (1994), Chris Tiffin and Alan Lawson provide a definition of literary colonialism that is highly appropriate for *Jerusalem*: 'Colonialism [...] alternately fetishized and feared its Others – both race and place – depending on its sense of the threat posed by the Other.'¹⁷⁷ The presence of imperialistic or colonial ideology in the text is thus introduced early on, and runs in parallel to its programmatic presentation of the Swedes as victims of a 'cruel' place. While the first part of the second volume emphasises victimisation, its latter part builds towards a solution in the more positive spirit of cultural imperialism, or to use Lagerroth's somewhat euphemistic term, 'patriarkaliska filantropi'.¹⁷⁸ The following pages will demonstrate this process.

After they depart from Jaffa, the narrow Swedish perspective is limited even further. The train journey to Jerusalem, during which Birger Larsson becomes increasingly unwell, the first glimpse of Jerusalem, and indeed the entire initial encounter with the city are seen solely through Birger's eyes:

'solen stod helt nära randen av de västra kullarna. Den var mycket röd och stor, och den utgöt ett starkt sken över himmelen. Även all jorden glimmade och sken i rött och gult. Men Birger tyckte, att det sken, som föll över jorden, inte kom från solen, utan från staden ovan honom. Det utgick från dess murar, som skimrade likt ljusst guld, och från dess torn, som voro täckta med skivor av bränt glas.' (II, 17-18)

This passage already contains reference to the falseness of the image, by being seen through the eyes of a sick man and the use of the subjective 'tyckte'. And if there was any doubt concerning the illusory nature of Birger's perceived Jerusalem, the author soon confirms the reader's suspicions. Carried on a stretcher by two of his friends, Birger does not travel to the Golden City on the Hill – 'det rätta Jerusalem' as he calls it – but to the nether world that is the author's 'rätta', or true, Jerusalem. Curiously, this infernal city, strewn with foul-smelling litter and inhabited by the 'lemlästade tiggare' and 'magra, smutsiga hundarna' (II, 20), is not exactly the city Lagerlöf saw on her arrival. In a letter dated 6 March 1900, she describes the entry into Jerusalem as follows: 'Allt är mycket ödsligt [...] Nå midt bland kullarna ligger

Jerusalem mycket vackert med taggiga murar rundt om, det var vackert och strålande [...] *Det var ej den svarta och smutsiga stad, som alla tala om.*' (my italics)¹⁷⁹ Although her initial impression is similar to Birger's, her subsequent letters do not contain its negation, the way the novel does. It must be remembered that Lagerlöf and her companion Sophie Elkan arrived in Palestine during the winter season, while the farmers arrived in the hot summer, which might significantly alter the experience. The interesting thing about her statement, though, is the suggestion that since Jerusalem was known as 'den svarta och smutsiga stad' she had to present it as such in the novel, even though her personal impression was somewhat different. This is not to say that Lagerlöf ignored the dirt and stench of the Holy City, and these, too, feature in her letters, but not prominently. It is therefore fair to suggest that Lagerlöf's description of Jerusalem in the novel is intentionally biased. Since questions such as loyalty to one's native landscape are part of the novel's agenda, the foreign landscape functions not just as a setting, but also as the simplified opposite of all that is familiar.

Apart from highlighting the contrasts between Sweden and Palestine, Birger's frustration with the inability to reach 'det rätta Jerusalem' has a broader psychological significance. Lagerlöf is warning not just against leaving the homeland, but also against chasing a dream that has no 'earthy' base to it. Terrified, and bitter at his friends for leading him through 'helvetet' (II, 25), Birger catches one last glimpse of his longed-for place, this time a watery surface 'långt, långt i fjärran', presumably the Dead Sea whose name already suggests its deceptive nature. 'Det var så vackert och lätt och genomskinligt och lysande, att man inte kunde tro, at den syn man såg hörde jorden till.' (II, 25. My italics) The dying Birger can do no more than bewail the fact 'att det [det rätta Jerusalem] flyttade sig allt längre och längre bort, allteftersom han sökte att uppnå det, så att inte han och inte heller en enda av de andra någonsin kunde komma ditin.' (II, 26) Shifting the 'real Jerusalem' further and further to the east corresponds to the way in which the 'real paradise' was moved further and further west in novels set in America. In both cases characters choose to believe that the longed-for place is simply farther than initially thought, and not that it does not exist at all. In both cases, though, the presentation is ironic, since narrators

of emigrant novels rarely believe in the existence of that longed-for place.

Inserted between the chapter that describes the Swedes' arrival in Palestine and the chapters in which their first gruesome experiences of Jerusalem are recounted, is a chapter titled "Gordonisterna". In it the narrator reintroduces Mrs. Gordon and tells of the birth of the American Colony in Jerusalem. As in Cleng Peerson's life, coincidence plays an important role in the Colony's history. Many survivors of the L'Univers – among them Mrs. Gordon, Miss Hoggs, the two French sailors, the young bride and Hellgum himself, who witnessed the disaster – arrive in Jerusalem for one reason or another. However, although Hauge's historical coincidences – the literary device that allows Cleng to be present when important events happen – are all linked to place, the crucial element in them is *movement*. While Cleng's mobility is of paramount importance to the plot, Lagerlöf's coincidences all lead to one *place*. Thus, alongside Ingmarsgården, Jerusalem emerges as one of the novel's main 'characters'.

Another interesting aspect of "Gordonisterna" is the vision for Palestine's future, formulated by Eliahu, a native of Palestine with a European education. Since the country is neglected and backward, the only solution would be to import both people and ideas from the West, and turn it into 'ett nytt Eden' (II, 44), a dream with obvious similarities to the European vision of America. In both cases the biblical ideal is to be achieved, somewhat paradoxically, by modern means. There is evidence to suggest that Eliahu's vision corresponds to Lagerlöf's own. In a letter to Georg Brandes, dated 27.6.1902, she writes: 'Jag tror inte på Sionismen, men inte skulle det vara omöjligt att i Palestina införa en klok, ärlig styrelse under europeiskt protektorat.'¹⁸⁰ Although European values are the only way forward, at least initially Lagerlöf presented the Americans with the challenge of bringing civilisation to the Levant, while the Swedes were doomed to suffer there, as the suggestively titled chapter "Korsbäraren" indicates: 'Det var inte för att dö och inte för att leva, utan endast och allenast för att bära Kristi kors, som de voro hitkomna.' (II, 40) However, even during those early stages, when the immigrants are exposed to the cruelty of Jerusalem and seem entirely helpless, there are indications that their industrious

character – a Swedish national trait accentuated against the backdrop of oriental lethargy – is the seed to their salvation, which ties in with the author's vision for the salvation of the place itself. Soon after their arrival, the male immigrants roll up their sleeves and prepare to make 'stolar och bord och sänger och diskbänk och köksskåp och annat, som behövdes' (II, 34), while the women intend to 'väva kläder, mattor, handdukar och fint duktyg' (II, 35). They even seem at ease with the Colony's communal principles, despite the fact that the novel itself conveys other values. For them communalism is a kind of game in which they participate 'modiga och sorglösa och lekfulla.' (II, 36)

The historical evidence, on the other hand, suggests anything but amicable co-existence within the bi-ethnic colony. In 1957 Edith Larsson, Olof Henrik Larsson's daughter, presented the 'revised' version of events in her memoirs *Dalafolk i heligt land*. Her accusations have been repeated by recent Scandinavian scholars (and those writing from a Swedish point of view) in an attempt to prove that life in the colony was neither harmonious nor egalitarian. Jakob H. Grønæk, in an article titled "Lewis Larsson. A Swede in Jerusalem in the First Half of the Twentieth Century" (1990), claims that tension between Larsson and Anna Spafford began building up soon after their first meeting, and did not subside until his death.¹⁸¹ Grønæk goes so far as to claim that the Spaffords made sure that the Swedes who emigrated to Jerusalem were affluent farmers who, by selling their farms, could contribute to the upkeep of the Colony. He also states that the Nås farmers, used as they were to physical work, soon became the servants in the Colony.¹⁸² The claim that both the Chicago Swedes and the Dalarna farmers were not treated as equals is indirectly confirmed in Bertha Spafford Vester's memoirs, in which the two groups are mentioned only in passing. The American Swedes are patronisingly described as 'cooks, waitresses, and housemaids in the homes of our friends, where they were loved and respected by their employers for their honesty and integrity',¹⁸³ and the Dalarna farmers as 'simple country people'.¹⁸⁴ In 1998 Helga Dudman and Ruth Kark published a detailed account of the Colony's history, *The American Colony. Scenes from a Jerusalem Saga*. It is based mainly, but not solely, on comparing the two sets of memoirs – those of Edith Larsson and those of Bertha Spafford Vester. It

too systematically attempts to shatter the illusion of harmony within the Colony by emphasising the suffering of its Swedish members. According to sources cited by Dudman and Kark – some of them first-hand accounts by former Colony members – the struggle to adjust to a hostile climate was often not as difficult as the struggle to maintain one's identity within the Colony, where the Swedes felt culturally and linguistically isolated; those among them who came to Palestine as children were forced to give up Swedish for English.¹⁸⁵ Of the Swedish members who wrote their memoirs in later life – ironically in English, since they no longer mastered Swedish – many agree that Lagerlöf's novel has over-romanticised their situation.¹⁸⁶ It is however important to emphasise that the citing of historical sources in this analysis is not intended to prove that the novel is neither accurate nor realistic, but rather to illustrate that Lagerlöf had an agenda which made her interpret reality in a certain way.

Why then did Lagerlöf, who expressed such reservation towards emigration in the novel's first volume, not seize upon this evidence to demonstrate that leaving one's homeland ends in humiliation? Showing how affluent and independent farmers become dependent servants could have been a dire warning indeed! A possible explanation would include both personal and national considerations. On her first visit to the Colony Lagerlöf struck a friendship with Anna Spafford, with whom she shared the vision of unity and understanding among all people. Dudman and Kark suggest that out of respect for the Spaffords, Lagerlöf overlooked the tensions between Americans and Swedes in the Colony.¹⁸⁷ There was also a strong sense of national affinity. Lagerlöf wrote to her mother after that first visit:

'Jag kan ej neka till att jag blef mycket rörd öfver att se så många svenska ansikten härute i det främmande och att se hur glada de blefvo att få tala med oss. [...] Jag tyckte mycket om dem nu, de säga att de ej längta hem, men nog voro de glada att se landsmän. De gjorde ett mycket lyckligt intryck.'¹⁸⁸

The 'nu' in this passage is of particular interest as it suggests that Lagerlöf was resentful towards the immigrants prior to meeting them. Since she was attracted to the Colony's ideology and felt sympathy towards its members, she chose not to allow her Swedish characters to be humiliated by their fellow colonists and instead

projected all their hardships – which were undeniable – upon the landscape.

It thus seems that Lagerlöf intentionally made location the dominant source of conflict in the text, and the link between place and fate is a symbolic one. In Sweden, none of the tragic instances of death, cruelty and suffering are explained as mirroring the place where they occur. At the opening of the first volume Brita murders her own baby in revenge; later on Stor Ingmar dies while trying to save three small children from drowning; the wretched Eljas plagues his wife Karin until he dies, and Karin herself suffers paralysis. The peaceful Dalarna parish is also the setting of Ingmar's betrayal of Gertrud, and of her vicious and vindictive dreams. Ingmarsgården itself is the place where Barbro is tormented by a guilty conscience and the cruel legend about her ancestry. All these traumatic events appear as contrasts to the otherwise harmonious setting. But this changes with the change in environment. Birger Larsson, as we have seen, dies of an ailment that is not clinically defined and is therefore understood to be his disappointment at the sight of the *real* Jerusalem. The first section of the second volume is abundant with more such examples. In the ironically titled chapter "Guds heliga stad, Jerusalem", Gunhild is killed by the blistering sun, after reading her father's letter in which he informs her of her mother's death upon hearing rumours of the Gordonists' immoral practices. The evil character of the place, as indicated from this scene, is twofold, since it is not only a natural phenomenon like the sun, but also the slander it radiates – in this case reaching all the way to Sweden – that generate death. On the very same day Gertrud witnesses the death of a young Russian pilgrim, caused directly by the same defamatory spirit which is, according to Lagerlöf, the spirit of Jerusalem. Gertrud is consequently on the verge of insanity and is only fully recovered after Ingmar arrives in the Colony and opens her eyes to the reality of the place. Even more harrowing is the story of Halvor's death in the chapter "I Gehenna". Having lost his beloved daughter Greta in the foreign place, he finds no solace for his grief: 'Om hon hade dött i Dalarne och blivit begravnen på hemsocknens kyrkogård, skulle han väl ha kunnat slita sig ifrån att jämt tänka på henne, men nu förekom det honom, att hans lilla dotter måste känna sig ensam och övergiven borta på den hemska kyrkogården.' (II, 121) Earlier it has been observed that in many emigrant novels death and burial

often signify assimilation in the new place. Not so in *Jerusalem*, in which death is not a natural occurrence but a reflection of the place's brutality. Witnessing the desecration of graves in the American Cemetery, where the Colony's dead are buried, Halvor suffers a stroke but finds enough strength to carry his daughter's coffin back to the Colony. On his way, the scenery changes to become the source of his distress: 'Murarna och ruinhögarna skrämde honom. Allt hade blivit besynnerligt hotfullt och fientligt. Det främmande landet och den främmande staden glädde sig åt hans sorg. [...] detta är ett obarmhärtigt land.' (II, 128) Exhausted he arrives at the Colony gate, and collapses. His last words strengthen the impression that even in death Jerusalem cannot be a resting place for the Swedes: "Laga, att hon [Greta] får ligga under en grön torva! [...] Och lägg också mig under en grön torva!" (II, 131)¹⁸⁹ Later in the novel Ingmar loses his eye in another macabre scene which involves disturbing the dead. This time, however, Ingmar is not a passive victim but a representative of a moral code superior to the one prevalent in the Holy City. Nonetheless all the above examples show that tragedy and death become associated with a place, if that place is not home, or as Eyvind Johnson sums up the immigrants' experience of Brazil in *Se dig inte om!*: 'Döden har en djupare mening här, den är mer skrämmande och varnande: den straffar dina höga önskningar, och akta dej för önskningar.'¹⁹⁰

It must be stressed, though, that the source of Jerusalem's evil comes from its people, inseparable as they are from the landscape that forms them. An evil place produces evil people, and they mirror one another. As in *Cleung Pearson*, where the foreign place spells danger because of extreme climatic conditions and disease, much of the real suffering is caused by man. Matters of faith in particular seem to bring out the best – usually within the segregated ethnic group – and the worst – usually when confronted with those of another conviction – in the characters. In *Cleung Pearson* power struggles between various denominations explain the breakdown of the ethnic collective. Although a similar atmosphere is felt in *Jerusalem*'s second volume, here sectarianism plays a unifying role for the Swedish immigrants. Heat and disease kill some of them, but Lagerlöf points a finger at the real culprit: 'Här är själajaktens Jerusalem, här är de onda tungornas Jerusalem, här är lögnens, förtälets och

smädelsens Jerusalem. Här förföljer man utan vila, här mördar man utan vapen. Detta är det Jerusalem, som dödar människor.' (II, 76) A letter to Brandes dated 15 June 1902 again shows that what may be interesting for a visitor to *observe* can be used by a novelist to *explain*: 'Jerusalem, där luften är så het af religion [...] där de lugnaste människor bli fanatiska, från sina sinnen under striden mellan alla de olika sekterna. Det är ingen behaglig stad, men det är dock märkligt att råka på ett helt samhälle af fanatiker.'¹⁹¹ Since Lagerlöf found it necessary to channel the immigrants' difficulties to one source – the place itself – it was also necessary to explain how a geographical location could be a personification of evil. The most appropriate solution was to point towards the religious aspect, since it was religion that caused the split in the harmonious parish to begin with.

Jerusalem: Sweden of the Levant

Although Johnson's statement and Lagerlöf's approach are linked to the emigrant novel's general cautious attitude towards the foreign place, whatever that place may be, the specific setting of *Jerusalem* provides ample opportunity to apotheosise the traditional rural lifestyle of Scandinavia. In his essay "A British Italy in the North: Landscape, *landskap*, and the body" (1995), Kenneth R. Olwig explains the basic difference between North and South, as perceived from Classical times onwards:

'If the South was the centre of a hierarchical power apparatus, the North was an open territory characterized by community. If ancient cities such as Rome were the birthplace of intellectual civilization, then the Northern forests were the source of physical and emotional strength. In the South the city was the *raison d'être* of the country, but in the North it was the country that gave rise to the city.'¹⁹²

His interesting observation explains the background to romantic ideas about the 'noble savage' in a savage landscape. When adopted by national-romanticism these ideas served to prove the superiority of the Northern European countries and peoples. Hence in *Jerusalem* the Near East is systematically presented as inferior to the North. Moreover, since the novel is set in a place of biblical significance, Lagerlöf uses the Bible's own preference of the pastoral (see p. 54 above) to justify depicting rural Sweden as the ideal. By doing so she follows a long literary tradition of presenting a negative view of the city in order to emphasise the advantages of the countryside, as Peter Preston and Paul Simpson-Housley write in their introduction to *Writing the*

City: Eden, Babylon and the New Jerusalem: 'the city is seen as the site of guile, corruption, intrigue and false values, as against the positive, natural, straightforward values of the countryside. To escape from the city and live far from courts and princes is to make a choice in favour of the kind of authenticity that can only be found in the pastoral life.'¹⁹³ As Lagerlöf's characters move in the opposite direction, their only hope is to bring pastoral values into the city.

In Moberg's emigrant epic, the homeland becomes precious, for some, not all of the characters, only from a distance. Unlike him, as demonstrated earlier, Lagerlöf presents the home parish as the ideal from the outset. Attachment to the homeland in the two novels is different, among other things because Moberg's text is based on topographical similarities, while Lagerlöf's is based on contrasts. Swedes in Jerusalem learn to appreciate their native landscape by experiencing its total opposite. Fresh, clear water emerges as the dominant symbol of the fertile parish,¹⁹⁴ and in a chapter titled "Paradisbrunnen" the unbearable heat of the Palestinian summer calls forth memories of the homeland. Although initially resisting comparisons with Sweden, as befitting members of a congregation that has renounced all worldly preoccupations, and instead concentrating on legends about Jerusalem's bountiful past, Hök Gabriel Mattsson finally exclaims: 'från morgon till kväll tänker jag på en älv, som rinner frisk och klar med ljus, blankt vatten. [...] Och den älven är inte uttorkad som Kidron eller blott en dröm som Hezekiels flod eller omöjlig att finna som Hiskias, utan den forsar och strömmar ännu i denna dag. Jag tänker på Dalälven.' (II, 139) It is of course no coincidence that Gabriel, who later returns to Sweden with Ingmar and Gertrud, is the one who represents attachment to the homeland. Significantly, this attachment is not only sentimental, but also based on the realisation, that whereas Jerusalem's glory belongs to the past, Sweden's glory is of the present. Another explanation of the second volume's preoccupation with Jerusalem's landmarks – as opposed to its function as a contemporary 'lived-in' city – is given by Lagerroth, specifically in relation to the 1902 edition: '*Selma Lagerlöf har inte kunnat finne något verkligt hållbart, förnuftigt skäl till utflyttningen till Palestina, och i brist på ett sådant har hon fallit tillbaka på de berömda topografiska motiven.*' (Author's italics)¹⁹⁵ The negative tone that characterised the original

version has been modified in the 1909 edition. A justification for the Swedes' immigration to Palestine is introduced, as it becomes more and more apparent that the country needs *them*, and that they are part of God's plan for the revival of His Holy Land.¹⁹⁶

If Lagerlöf's description of Jerusalem in the first part of the second volume was apocalyptic, the New Heaven that emerges after this Armageddon is not universal but local, a mini-Sweden. This is an example of the blurring of the boundaries between religious and national ideas, leading to the formation of a national creed that is as authoritative and effective as its religious predecessor. Qualities associated with piety – and preached universally – are projected upon a specific nation to become its unique characteristics. Even before Ingmar's arrival the Colony members stand out for their diligence, cleanliness and goodwill. This is demonstrated in the scene in which Baram Pascha, the owner of the Colony's building, goes to inspect his property after hearing rumours of the Gordonists' immoral behaviour. With him the reader is presented with the true state of affairs: the Colony's children are unlike all other children in Jerusalem, 'ty dessa voro rentvättade, de hade hela kläder och starka skodon, och deras hår var ljust och slätkammat' (II, 110), while the Colony's women are seen walking 'mycket stilla och sedesamt, deras kläder voro tarvliga, i händerna buro de tunga, välfyllda korgar.' (II, 111) And as he is shown around the building all he sees are 'människor med redliga, kloka ansikten. Alla sutto tysta och allvarliga vid sitt arbete, men då han kom in i rummet, lyste de opp av välvilja.' (II, 114) One must not forget that the Colony consisted of Americans and members of other nations as well as Swedes and American-Swedes. Nonetheless the physical appearance of the place confirms, with its fair simplicity, its 'Swedishness'. In fact it is reminiscent of the Schoolmaster's 'Sion' (see p. 242 above) with its 'renskurade golv, vita sängomhängen, snygga möbler av ljusbetsat trä', 'den bländvita marmortrappan' and 'de ljusmålade väggarna' (II, 115). This, incidentally, corresponds to Lagerlöf's initial impression of the Colony. In a letter to her mother dated 15 March 1900 she writes: 'Det är ett särdeles märkvärdigt folk [...] men det är angenämt att se hur allting är rent, välskött och väl ansadt hos dem.'¹⁹⁷ Perhaps it was that pleasant physical environment the immigrants created that inspired Lagerlöf to present the

Colony as a mini-Sweden, a success story with national, rather than personal, implications.

Ingmar Ingmarsson – Paragon of Rootedness or Model Immigrant?

With Ingmar's arrival in the Colony, the import of Swedish values gathers momentum. As he enters the assembly hall his fellow-parishioners start singing in Swedish (II, 169). A national sentiment, whether dormant or oppressed,¹⁹⁸ awakens and the belief in the Swedes' role in the future of Palestine is translated into action. But before such positive ideas can be implemented, the last remains of illusion must be cleared away. In "Dervischen", Ingmar exposes the man, whom Gertrud believed to be Jesus, as a 'false' prophet. In the following chapters he himself emerges as the Colony's saviour. In a scene that mirrors Ingmar's altruistic act of saving Hellgum, his arch-rival, in the first volume, he now saves the Colony from destruction, although the Colony's downfall could absolve him of his wrongdoing, which led to Gertrud's emigration. The repetition of the same motif serves to emphasise the unshakeable validity of the Ingmarssons' – and by extension, of Swedish – values, even in a foreign location. And since these values are morally superior, also their practical implications must be accepted if, to put it in a simplified way, good is to triumph over evil.

What are those practical implications? Lagerroth notes that 'brukandet av jorden framstår hos Selma Lagerlöf ofta som en Gudi behaglig gärning',¹⁹⁹ parenthetically another religious notion presented with a clear national interpretation. Tilling the land, however, is not just an aim in itself but also an activity to test man's morality. In *Jerusalem* the narrator presents the introduction of the northern European work ethic as the only solution for the backward *country*, but Ingmar himself thinks of work as a way of life, linked to the well-being of the *people*: 'Jag kan knappt förstå hur svenskarna härute ha kunnat härda ut så länge utan att arbeta i skogen och i jorden.' (II, 257) Nonetheless, Ingmar, too, fostered to rule over his people, provides an interpretation to the Swedish immigration which is not free from 'imperialistic' thinking: 'Vår Herre har samlat hit och sått ut fläckvis över landet sådana, som kunna lära och uppfostra de andra, då upprättelsen skall börja.' (II, 261) Ingmar's

entrepreneurial efforts in Palestine include operating a flour mill, cultivating land and setting up irrigation systems. These help modernise the colony *and* make it more traditionally Swedish. Significantly, with the introduction of paid labour the tragic cycle of events is broken, 'alla äro strålande belåtna, de älska sin koloni högre än någonsin, de lägga planer, de anordna nya företag. Det var blott detta, som fattades dem för att vara riktigt lyckliga.' (II, 286)

An emerging difference between the Ancient World and the New is the association of the former with degeneration and the latter with regeneration. Palestine is characterised by indolence, America by hectic activity. In both places, though, the role of the European immigrant – and the Scandinavian one in particular – is to transform the landscape into its 'destined' state – that of a yielding garden. Consequently, as it is presented in the majority of emigrant novels, the landscape needs the immigrant at least as much as the immigrant needs the landscape. Ingmar's impact on the surrounding is strikingly similar to Karl Oskar's in Moberg's emigrant epic. Both are industrious rural aristocrats whose coarse physiognomies conceal their internal nobility. Like Karl Oskar who rejects anything that is not won through hard work, Ingmar tells Mrs. Gordon: "hemma hos oss tycka vi, att det är bättre att lita på sitt eget arbete än på sparda pengar." (II, 275) That Ingmar is a symbol beyond the individual character is clear from the role he plays in the novel, and Edström has commented that 'Ingmarsgestalten är en unik och monumental skapelse som blivit något av en nationell litterär prototyp för storbonden. [...] I *Jerusalem* möter vi storbonden djupt förankrad i den svenska jorden och traditionen'.²⁰⁰ The irony is that to a large extent Karl Oskar was moulded according to the very same prototype, and that he – like Ingmar – imports rural Swedish values to places where they are most needed. But whereas Ingmar fulfils the ideal by returning to the homeland, Karl Oskar fulfils it by implanting himself and his descendants in the virgin land, making it as Swedish as possible. Edström claims that Moberg's epic is different from Lagerlöf's because he chose Karl Oskar, 'prototypen för utvandrarerna', as his main character.²⁰¹ However, in many ways Karl Oskar resembles Ingmar to a far greater extent than he does Hellgum, Halvor or any other of Lagerlöf's immigrants. As the study of Moberg and Hauge's texts has shown, an important element in many

emigration novels is the charismatic leader who facilitates the passage from familiar to foreign by guiding and protecting his fellow countrymen. In *Jerusalem* this element is 'flawed', both in relation to the characters themselves, but perhaps also in relation to the plot. Hellgum loses his powers in Palestine, and the Swedish immigrants are therefore without a leader, until Ingmar's arrival. Thus, although he is not physically present throughout the process, he fulfils the same function Karl Oskar and Cleg Peerson did in their respective plots, despite serious ideological differences between them.

Before Ingmar's return to Sweden, the Colony's members assemble. The sight of Ingmar, who from the immigrants' point of view has come to play the same role in Jerusalem as his ancestors played in the parish, is stirring up memories of the homeland. As they look at him they cannot help thinking about 'allt det, som var tryggt och rättrådigt och välordnat i det gamla landet. Medan han hade varit här hos dem, hade de nog tyckt, att något av detta hade kommit till dem. Men då Ingmar nu reste, föll hjälplöshetens ängslan över dem.' (II, 321) In their minds they see the parish as it was before the Hellgumian upheaval, and as it will be upon Ingmar's return: 'De sågo hela nejden med fält och gårdar. Och människorna färdades fredligt och stilla på vägarna, allt var tryggt, dag efter dag gick på samma sätt, och det ena året var så likt det andra, att man inte kunde skilja dem åt.' But Lagerlöf has already indicated that the Swedes' presence in Jerusalem is not meaningless, and she therefore finds things with which they can comfort themselves: 'Men just då bönderna påminde sig den stora stillheten därhemma, kom det över dem hur stort och berusande det var, att de hade kommit ut i livet, att de hade fått ett mål att leva för och voro borta från dagarnas grå enahanda.' (II, 321) And Ingmar, too, has learnt to respect the Colonists and declares: "Jag tänker allt, att ni härute gör oss därhemma stor heder" (II, 323). These last two quotes are central to the novel's attitude to emigration, which has evolved from negative in the first volume to the hesitantly positive towards the end of the second. With Ingmar the reader must accept that both stability and mobility may have a positive psychological impact.

Emigration and Pilgrimage

In *Image and Pilgrimage in Christian Culture* (1978), Victor Turner and Edith Turner write: 'All sites of pilgrimage have this in common: they are believed to be places where miracles once happened, still happen, and may happen again.'²⁰² They explain further that 'behind such journeys in Christendom lies the paradigm of the *via crucis*, with the added purgatorial element appropriate to fallen men.'²⁰³ Ingmar's pilgrimage to Jerusalem, prophesied in the first volume by Stark Ingmar (In "De sågo himmelen öppen"), is a religious pilgrimage only in form. While the Christian pilgrimage is intended to secure one's afterlife (although an increased social status is sometimes gained through it), Ingmar carries out his pilgrimage as penance for a wrong he has done, so that his *earthly* life may begin in earnest. This life, however, does have a celestial dimension to it, as is true of the lives of all the Ingmars, who must fulfil their role in this life so that they may join their forefathers in heaven. Whereas Christian pilgrimage is directed not only towards a place, but also at certain *objects* in that place, Ingmar does not seek holy places nor does he hope to be cleansed of his sin by coming into contact with religious artefacts. Instead he goes through a journey during which he discovers the 'stor', or big, Ingmar within him. In the Christian context this corresponds to the pilgrimage's 'initiatory quality', which allows the pilgrim to enter a 'new, deeper level of existence'.²⁰⁴ By bringing Gertrud back he performs the task of liberating his and Barbro's conscience from guilt. The pilgrimage thus has a psychological function. At the same time it operates on the religious-turned-national level: Gertrud, an epitome of purity, is like a holy relic stolen by the infidels during an East-West conflict. By bringing her back home from 'captivity', as his father brought Brita home from prison, Ingmar restores the parish to its former glory.

While successful immigration leads to assimilation in the receiving country, a successful pilgrimage ends in homecoming. Indeed, plot-wise the main difference between Lagerlöf, Moberg and Hauge is that *Jerusalem* ends with renewed movement, or as Edström puts it, 'från kolonin går en mini invandring till hemlandet'.²⁰⁵ However, the return to the homeland does not fully restore harmony, since some of the immigrants never return. The harmony that is achieved – or

regained – is the harmony between the characters themselves, who have learnt to respect one another regardless of their differences. Since all the main characters have emerged as positive representatives of Swedish values, or phrased more bluntly, as ‘national heroes’ – Lagerroth in fact goes as far as to declare that ‘Hellgumianerna är – alla olikheter till trots – en modern tids vikingar’²⁰⁶ – it is the text’s duty to affirm that national sentiment may be expressed in various ways. This is how Ingmar ends up being the immigrants’ most convincing advocate, although he himself remains a paragon of tradition and permanence. On his return he tells Barbro:

‘Jag tänkte, att om detta och allt annat, som människor hade upprättat på denna jorden, hade fått finnas kvar, så skulle den vara alldeles uppfylld av härlighet. [...] Men så kom jag att tänka på att om allt detta hade funnits kvar, så hade vi, som nu levde, ingenting att ta oss till, för då behövdes inte vårt arbete. Och det är en människas största lycka att få bygga upp vad hon själv behöver och visa vad hon duger till, och därför måste det gamla bort [...] Han [Vår Herre] vill inte, att vi ska gå till ärvda gårdar och upprädda hemman, utan han vill, at vi ska vinna oss på nytt det, som ska vara vårt.’ (II, 356-7)

With this statement Ingmar indicates that his pilgrimage served the same psychological function as the emigration of his fellow-parishioners, and that the two must therefore be treated as equally necessary. It is however no coincidence that the novel ends in Ingmarsgården with the re-affirmation of the traditional values that dominated the novel as a whole, for although the narrator accepts the urge to explore and rebuild, the foreign location will always be viewed with suspicion and be associated with danger. Through Barbro Lagerlöf presents what Edström calls ‘en apoteos av hemmet’²⁰⁷ that neatly concludes the novel’s love-plot, but is also inseparable from the novel’s ideological preoccupation with fixity and mobility: ‘då såg hon sig omkring, omfattade med blicken hela den gamla stugan, det långa, låga fönstret, de väggfasta bänkarna och eldstaden, där släkt efter släkt hade suttit vid sina sysslor i skenet från torrvedsbrasan. Allt detta omgav henne med trygghet. Hon kände, att det skulle skydda och bevara henne.’ (II, 373)

‘bonderoman’, ‘kärlekshistoria’ or ‘utvandrarepos’?

A curious biographical detail highlights the novel’s ambiguous approach to emigration. Lagerlöf was known for her active involvement in the women’s movement, an anti-traditional role in itself, although she was not a militant feminist.

In the Suffrage Congress of 1911 she gave a speech in which she drew parallels between the liberation of women and emigration to America. Women's liberation, like emigration, is an inevitable and positive process driven by a natural force. Like the immigrants, women too will one day transform the wilderness into a cultivated garden: 'Gulnande vetefält, nya städer, uppblomstrande stater visar oss var emigrantens väg har gått fram.'²⁰⁸ Since both *Jerusalem* and *Nils Holgersson* (see p. 20 above) are easily read as anti-emigration texts, such a view is rather perplexing.

With that knowledge in mind many readers of *Jerusalem* are somewhat puzzled by the narrator's change of attitude towards the Hellgumians once they arrive in Palestine, and try to find clues in the text and elsewhere in order to determine on whose side Lagerlöf *really* is – Ingmar or the emigrants. Both Edström and Lagerroth agree that such an attempt is meaningless, and the above analysis has shown how the two seemingly conflicting worldviews may co-exist peacefully, if not physically. It is by implication also meaningless to determine whether the novel is a 'bonderoman' or an 'utvandrarepos.' *Jerusalem* is a complex text that cannot be read as a thesis on a single issue. The important point for this discussion is that it can *also* be read as an emigrant novel. But can it?

Although not a typical emigrant novel in terms of plot, setting, geographical orientation and culmination, *Jerusalem* still conforms to the emigrant novel's basic tendency to focus its attention on the national. The ideal remains Sweden – whether the original location or the mini-Sweden that is built in Jerusalem. Since its individual characters are confronted by 'otherness', they emerge as emblems of national virtues. Similarly, the juxtaposition of the idealised national landscape with the foreign place results in portraying the exotic as menacing. As is the case with Moberg and Hauge, Lagerlöf's novel also has an educational role. Its documentary basis helps to create an illusion of authenticity, and its presentation of events corresponds to what readers would like to think of as 'history'. An example of the way in which the novel is perceived as a credible historical account is found in the American Colony Hotel's²⁰⁹ website, in which the visitor is referred to the novel for more information: 'The story of their (the Swedes) journey and their life in Jerusalem

as part of the Colony is told *fictionally but very accurately* by Selma Lagerlöf in her classic novel “Jerusalem” (my italics). This perceived verisimilitude does not, of course, diminish the literary accomplishments of the novel. *Jerusalem*’s popularity is more often attributed to its quality of fiction than to its pedagogical merits. In fact, one of the novel’s greatest achievements is the creation of fictional landscapes so moving that the reader experiences them as ‘truer’, or more stimulating, than the actual places they describe. This feature, although not unique to the emigrant novel, is a feature of many of the texts discussed thus far. Although some emigrant novels fall back on existing literary conventions regarding certain places, especially foreign ones, they also contribute to the formation of new such conventions, since their main concern is not the landscape itself but its symbolic role in the lives of those who inhabit it.²¹⁰

5. THREE EMIGRANT NOVELS – ONE SUB-GENRE?

So far the three core texts have been examined separately, although some comparative observations were woven into the discussion. In the following these will be summed up as part of a more concise system of comparison, with the aim of highlighting basic similarities and differences between the three texts. An attempt will be made to determine which elements of the emigrant novel are most prominent – those without which a text may not be classified as a Scandinavian emigrant novel.

Literature as History

The novels of Hauge and Lagerlöf both refer to historical events, Hauge also uses historical figures. In some respects their texts are accounts of real and specific phenomena. Moberg shares this ‘documentary’ approach with them, in fact his tetralogy, although based on fictional characters and events, is considered to be the best-researched and most realistic account of emigration. At the same time all three authors assert their right to produce fiction, to tell a story. Their novels can therefore be read as new interpretations of universal and timeless plots, set in the specific context of emigration from Scandinavia. Moberg puts emphasis on the experience of the emigrant, regardless of historical or geographical factors; Hauge examines the spiritual development of the eternal migrant and Lagerlöf presents a ‘national’ angle

on the theme of the hero's journey and homecoming, alongside a discussion on the advantages and disadvantages of change and mobility.

All three texts contain numerous sub-plots or themes. In Moberg's case these are all related to emigration, which allows one to define the text as an emigrant novel without too many reservations. This is more complicated with Hauge and Lagerlöf, whose novels contain a clear emigration *plot*, but also an obvious preoccupation with other matters, religious or ideological. Nonetheless all three are accepted as emigrant novels largely due to the fact, indicated above, that they are perceived by readers as reliable chronicles of historical events. Their documentary basis, however shaky in some instances, lends them an authenticity that turns the reader's attention from the universal to the specific, leading one to believe that 'that's how things *really* happened.' To challenge the historical accuracy of details in these novels is pointless from a literary point of view. However, to question their psychological authenticity seems relevant in a study that examines the underlying themes and 'messages' of the emigrant novel. Significantly, neither Moberg, Hauge nor Lagerlöf were immigrants or descendants of immigrants. Their accounts of emigration are never first-hand and personal, but panoramic, of epic scale. From their position as established authors in their respective native lands, they are writing first and foremost for the public at home. This public's desire to know about and understand its own history is different from an outsider's desire to read a good story. Hence the three authors are expected to produce texts that contain a balanced dose of thrilling fiction and historical verisimilitude, which is, incidentally, only an apparent verisimilitude, since the 'original' according to which it is verified is not necessarily based on facts but on the idealised version of its history each nation creates for itself. It is also possible that the authors themselves have a sense of mission, or simply a need, to present their readers with a text that will enhance their sense of national pride as well as educate them, and at the same time provide entertainment. In other words, authors may be using the theme of emigration for raising subjects such as loyalty to native landscapes and traditions and by extension, loyalty to the homeland. And in so doing they may be projecting on their characters certain thought processes and ideas that belong to a different period and/or to people with a different social background.

An important feature of the emigrant novel thus emerges, regardless of its setting, and that is its preoccupation with national matters in a text that presents the story of individual characters. This, as mentioned in Chapter Three, may be regarded as a general characteristic of the novel genre, especially in its early days. However, in the emigrant novel it is accentuated since the individual is greatly weakened to make way for the representative. Other conventions the emigrant novel appears to adhere to, especially those that directly or indirectly appeal to the national sentiment of the reader, will be discussed below.

Setting

Both Moberg and Hauge chose the pioneer period of emigration (1825-1865) as the setting for their novels, possibly because this period offers more opportunities for discovery and conquest, as well as conflicts between fantasy and reality. Pioneers appeal to the reader by appearing adventurous and heroic, more complex and interesting than later emigrants who were motivated by fashion or materialism. Lagerlöf's characters are also pioneers in the local context – they introduce the Scandinavian work ethic in a place marked by idleness. The place immigrants choose to settle in is also of great significance. Only in the earlier phases of emigration from Scandinavia was it possible to find landscapes that bear resemblance to the homeland, mainly in the Wisconsin and Minnesota areas. Could this be another reason for Moberg and Hauge to set their novels in the pioneer era? By doing so Moberg in particular risked losing the representative element in his novel (although Minnesota is the 'representative' Scandinavian state), since emigration was largely a phenomenon of the 1870s and 1880s. On the other hand immigrants who seek a place that resembles 'home' are less likely to be perceived as people who turned their backs on the homeland. In Lagerlöf's *Jerusalem* the same effect is reached by confronting the immigrants with Sweden's total opposite. The homeland becomes precious not through experiencing a similar – though larger or wilder – landscape, but through a feeling of absence. This, incidentally, is not an unusual feature of the emigrant novel, and it appears in popular novels such as Bojer's *Vor egen stamme* and Rølvaag's tetralogy.

The first volume of each of the three core-texts is set in the homeland and is considered by the critics to be the better part of the novel. It is often also the more popular with the reading public. The complex factors that make up a good literary text must not be simplified, yet it seems that one of the reasons readers enjoyed those first volumes more is their preference of the familiar to the exotic. *Jerusalem* provides a good example. While its first volume received enthusiastic reviews, the second volume's reception was much cooler. Lagerlöf believed that the explanation was, as Edström puts it, 'att svenskarna inte gillar att läsa om främmande länder.'²¹¹ It could however be that readers sense that the authors themselves are more comfortable in their familiar landscapes, and hence more skilful in their description.

Although all three texts view the agrarian lifestyle as the ideal, they describe different kinds of movement. Moberg's is the least confrontational as it depicts a rural → rural movement that guarantees the preservation of values in their original form. In Hauge's novel things are more complicated because some of the emigrants are townspeople, others come from the countryside. Also in America some choose to settle in towns, making the movement a rural + urban → rural + urban one. In this case too the majority choose to continue their former lifestyles, thereby securing the transfer of Norwegian values to the New World. Lagerlöf's text describes two types of movement, the one rural → urban, and the other rural → urban → rural. Since the novel focuses on the conflict between the two, and ends by emphasising the rural, it is evident that agrarian ideals have not been compromised. Moreover, they have been imported to the city, which is a rare feature in any novel, indicating their validity and superiority. It is in fact unlikely that an emigrant novel will present urbanisation in a foreign location as successful, because that would imply a double betrayal – not only of the homeland but also of the agrarian ideal. However, one must not forget that the majority of historical immigrants came from a rural background, and the values conveyed in the novels are not necessarily only the romanticised national values of the authors, but also the simple values of the immigrants themselves.

Characterisation and Plot

Historically, emigration was motivated first and foremost by material considerations. Moberg's tetralogy acknowledges this fact, and presents it as one of the various push and pull factors. Also among these factors, with a prominence that is not necessarily historically correct, is religious persecution in the Old World and freedom of worship in the New. Hauge's trilogy deals specifically with religious emigration, but contains all the other aspects of the phenomenon, including the economic one. Lagerlöf's *Jerusalem*, on the other hand, describes an emigration that is purely religious. It is the only novel discussed in this study that does not make any reference to material considerations as an incentive for emigration, in fact the emigrants lose their property as a result of it. What does all this tell us about the emigrant novel's interpretation of emigration incentives? Moberg and Hauge both accept the existence of material considerations, but since these are not interesting from a literary point of view, the emphasis is shifted towards ideology. Thus Karl Oskar does not emigrate to America simply because more food is available there, but because he is defiant of the rigid class system in Sweden, and confident of man's right and ability to sustain himself and his family in dignity. Hauge's characters, whose actions – including migration within the United States – talk of a desire for a better standard of living, are nonetheless presented as uncommonly pious. Since Lagerlöf's emigrants are headed for an inferior quality of (material) life, their decision could be described as mere folly. Instead, though, the author turns it into a heroic act of sacrifice. Thus it may be concluded that no matter what the incentive for emigration is, the author will tend to emphasise its ideological reasoning in order to remove the characters from the sphere of the mundane.

In all three novels much creative effort goes towards producing in-depth portraits of individuals, and yet all three have an element of the collective novel in them, Moberg's first volume (*Utvandrarna*) in fact being a successful example of the genre. The collective element in all three texts is part of the subject-matter, but is also a reflection of a desire to present a broader picture. This is done, paradoxically, by concentrating on individuals within the group who are typical of the experience the author wishes to convey, and yet unique enough to capture the reader's attention.

The collective aspect might also explain the popularity of the three novels. They tell the story of 'our' forefathers and attempt to appeal to the reading public as a whole – being of relevance for the collective identity rather than the individual one. .

The presence of a collective element in a novel does not rule out the existence of a leader figure. In the three core-texts it is possible to talk of a leader who is also the novel's 'hero'.²¹² Curiously, although religious collectives appear in the three texts, and are headed by their own leaders – Danjel Andreasson in Moberg's epic, Lars Larsson in Hauge's trilogy and Hellgum in Lagerlöf's novel – none of the 'heroes' join them as members. Karl Oskar, Cleng Peerson and Ingmar Ingmarsson have a charisma that stems from their individuality, their ability to act rather than preach. The separation of roles within the novel might indicate that all three authors reject the religious ideas of the collective. Moberg's atheism and Lagerlöf's unsympathetic portrayal of Hellgum, demonstrated also through the diminishing roles of Danjel and Hellgum in the respective texts, suggests this to be the case. However, the important point is not the acceptance or rejection of religious ideas but the superiority of the leader whose values are national values. In all three texts the character that leads his people in finding and clearing land, and in the introduction of a productive work cycle, is elevated to a position of leadership.

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In all three core-texts, indeed in most emigrant novels, the plot is marked by a sense of acceleration. Many pages are dedicated to the pre-emigration phase, giving the impression that the *decision* to emigrate is harder than the process itself. Once in the receiving country, the initial encounter and first weeks and months are described in great detail, since this is the period when dreams clash most violently with reality. The immigrants' real test is surviving the first winter (and in *Jerusalem*, the first summer), the harshest season during which the new land selects those suited to inhabit it. The test is moral as well as physical, and it is often at this phase that the characters move from the ordinary to the extraordinary. If not before, this is the point at which the immigrants become the narrator's 'Chosen People', whose innocence, devoutness and cleanliness is repeatedly emphasised.

Once the initial battle for physical survival has been won, mental survival requires that the immigrants make certain decisions concerning their position in their new country. All three texts reveal strong segregationist tendencies, and assimilation is often equated to a total loss of identity. Moberg discusses the issue mainly through the infiltration of English words and idioms into the immigrants' speech, a process that is perceived by Kristina as wholly negative. Karl Oskar finds the process inevitable, but he too is not comfortable with his neither/nor linguistic situation. Otherwise the immigrants are physically isolated from the non-Swedish world, which means that assimilation is not a real issue to contend with.²¹³ Also Hauge's characters surround themselves with fellow countrymen, although their membership in various religious denominations brings them into contact with other nationalities. Cleng Peerson himself makes the Indian Chief Shabbona one of his closest friends, yet he too chooses to live and die among Norwegians. In *Jerusalem*, the question of the immigrants' physical and social assimilation is not even raised, although they are a blessed influence on their environment.

What are the cultural implications of physical segregation? In the earlier mentioned essay "Geography, Literature and Migration", White notes, that the confrontation with new cultures can have opposite effects on different ethnic groups, or individuals within a specific ethnic group. There might be a tendency for secularisation, 'or alternatively there may be reassertions of cultural (religious) distinctiveness through a re-energising of attributes of distinction'.²¹⁴ Immigrants might carry out 'attempts to re-create elements of former lives, (possibly accentuating significant icons of that existence into quasi-talismans of high symbolic or ritual significance)'.²¹⁵ In the three core-texts we see how the homeland is imported to the host country bit by bit. Customs and artefacts, clothes and foods, all previously concrete details in one's daily life, become symbols of the lost paradise. Moberg and less obviously Hauge demonstrate that with distance the homeland's most treasured values are religious practices associated with the state church. Since these come to fill a cultural gap in the New World, they become national rather than religious rituals. This is more ambiguous in *Jerusalem*, but also in this case religious practices – for example the singing of hymns – gradually come to express national rather than religious

sentiments.

Imagery

Biblical models – structures and imagery – are consciously used by the three authors to convey the momentous dimensions of the events they are describing, as well as to capture the mood and cultural background of their characters. In their descriptions of the journey and the new land Moberg and Hauge make references to Noah's Ark, Abraham's migration from Ur to Canaan and the Israelites' exodus from Egypt. The Garden of Eden and the New Jerusalem are often images the characters themselves use. Curiously, Lagerlöf's biblical references are the most hesitant, although her characters come physically closest to the 'original' location. The distinction between the author's world of values and images and that of his or her characters is easiest to make in Moberg's case. A glimpse at his own personal background (see pp. 157-58, 183 above) and the tone of his writing make clear, that he is entering the world of his characters from a *different* world, that his understanding of the mechanisms of life is different from theirs. In Lagerlöf's novel things are more ambiguous, for although it is evident that she does not share the same interpretation of religion that several of her characters adopt, she does not reject Christian values, and as a consequence Christian imagery, altogether. Her narrative may be read as a theological debate between herself and the immigrants in Jerusalem, almost like a controversy between two factions of the same religion, each trying to prove its interpretation is the 'true' one. However, since her ideal is and remains rural Sweden, the images used to convey it, even if religious, acquire a national significance. Their spirituality is not eroded, but they are removed from the universal Christian context and adapted to describe a specific place. In Hauge's text a more harmonious relationship between author and characters exists. The idealistic religious driving force inside the plot is in many ways similar to the external driving force, *i.e.* the author's 'agenda'. However, Hauge does not ignore the hundred years or more of religious erosion that separate him from his characters. While he shares their values he is careful to convey his own beliefs by adding a modern touch – for instance his preoccupation with individual identity – to the archaic imagery.

If one accepts the emigrant novel as a type of 'national' novel, a surprising sparseness or absence of 'local' (*i.e.* Scandinavian) images, such as the Viking voyages of discovery and conquest, characterises the three core-texts. One possible explanation is the authors' desire to remain as close as possible to their characters' inner world, which was predominantly religious. Another, and not a conflicting one, is that Norse imagery functions best when it is *implied*. After all, the Vikings are not always associated with all that is positive in modern Scandinavia. Courageous they may have been, but also somewhat lacking in piety and modesty. Direct references to their actions will therefore mar the image of the immigrants. Indirect references, on the other hand, such as the suggestion that the immigrants' forefathers had discovered and colonised America centuries before, add a layer of specific historic significance to the universal act of migration, whose Western prototypes are found in the Bible.

Values and Ideology

The significance of land ownership in Scandinavian emigrant novels is overwhelming. The independent farmer, especially for Norwegians, is a cultural symbol of importance that far exceeds the practical benefits of owning one's own land. In the national-romantic era the 'bonde' has come to epitomise 'Norwegianness' itself. As a value, land ownership is imported to the New World, and is modified only in scale, for what was a respectable-sized farm in Scandinavia is just a meagre patch of land in America. Hence Karl Oskar's apparent greediness that contradicts his otherwise ascetic nature. Even Cleng Peerson who dreams of a communitarian fellowship never hesitates to purchase land for himself. In *Jerusalem* the idea is demonstrated by its negation. The possibility that Ingmarsgården will slip out of the family's hands is threatening the integrity of the entire parish to such an extent, that most of Ingmar's efforts are directed towards securing it for himself and his descendants. The forces that threaten the farm are quite clearly the novel's villains. In fact, Hellgum is presented at his cruellest when he urges his followers to sell their properties and put the money into a joint fund. Living a communal life is in many ways the biggest sacrifice the immigrants in Jerusalem make, and it only becomes worthwhile when the Scandinavian work ethic – land ownership's twin

value – is introduced to the Levant.

Another interesting aspect of the desire to own land is its occasional similarity to erotic desire. The term 'virgin land' immediately evokes sexual connotations that not so much explain but often make more complex the male protagonist's attraction to the new land. If erotic tension does exist between the male immigrant and his newly 'conquered' land, the female character's difficulty in adjusting to this new land may be understood to represent rivalry. This is most evident in the case of Karl Oskar and Kristina. A variation on the theme appears in the *Cleng Peerson* trilogy, in which there is no prominent female character to compete for Cleng's love. It may therefore be inferred that his passion for land has replaced his passion for women. Since there is no virgin land available in the Old or Ancient World, the theme of conquest does not feature in *Jerusalem*, although Ingmar's betrayal of Gertrude clearly suggests that his love of the farm is stronger than his love for her. Again with the possible exception of *Jerusalem*, love and passion are generally not strong elements in emigrant novels. Instead, landscapes are those that are described as sensual and male characters channel their passion towards the land.

As mentioned, America was thought of in terms of virginity or emptiness. Both Moberg and Hauge, however, accept not only that the land was inhabited before the arrival of European immigrants, but also that the original inhabitants were brutally banished from it. How do they deal with this moral dilemma? Hauge bypasses the problem by moving the discussion to the sphere of the spiritual, although he stresses on several occasions that the relationship between the Indians and the Norwegian immigrants was always cordial, strengthening the impression that whatever vices characterise white people in general, 'his' immigrants form the exception. Moberg approaches the issue from a practical point of view. While he too suggests that none of the Swedish immigrants ever consciously harmed the land's native inhabitants, their expulsion was necessary if hungry immigrants from Europe were to get a chance to sustain themselves, and others. It is morally and practically wrong to let fertile land lie fallow. In Lagerlöf's novel the issues are only seemingly different. Here, too, the immigrants encounter a local population with different traditions and

values, which the immigrants must change or uproot in order to survive themselves. This, though, is not the way things are presented in the novel. Like Moberg, Lagerlöf comes to the conclusion that the best way to justify immigration and colonisation – however small-scale, in the case of *Jerusalem* – is to make the receiving country appear as the needy part. Its situation, agricultural and cultural, means that whatever needs the immigrants came with – spiritual or material – it is in fact the receiving country that needs them.

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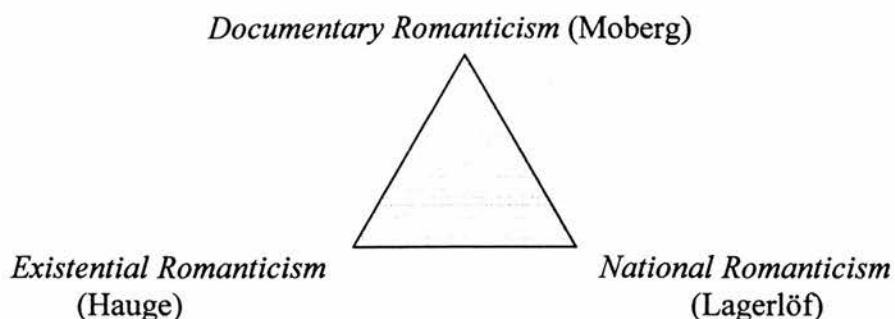
Some tension occurs when the author's vision of the perfect place does not correspond to that of the characters. Lagerlöf sees Sweden as the ideal location and her rejection of any other location is demonstrated through the hardships suffered by her characters in their chosen location, until Sweden comes to them in Palestine. For Hauge, the longed-for place is a state of mind, not a location, although he is sympathetic towards those who seek greater freedom, religious or material. Despite the fact that he distances himself from the fanatic and futile quest for the perfect place, Cleng Peerson's restlessness demonstrates the difficulty in giving up the quest. Only Moberg sympathises enough with his protagonist for the reader to associate Karl Oskar with the author's view on utopian pursuits. Karl Oskar, however, stands for a very sober version of the longed-for place, first and foremost because he does not attribute spiritual qualities to the land he acquires and cultivates. On the other hand, Danjel Andreasson who represents millennial dreams, disappears from the text when the time comes for him to attempt to realise them. All three authors are aware that once they arrive at their longed-for place, the immigrants will seek it – mentally if not physically – elsewhere, often, but not always, in the homeland.

Scandinavian immigrants rarely leave their homelands as patriots, even if they leave reluctantly. It is only from a distance that their local parish or village expands to encompass the whole country, and what is familiar from one region becomes typical of the nation as a whole. In *Topophilia*, Tuan makes a distinction between 'local patriotism' and what he calls 'imperial patriotism'.²¹⁶ The former relates to a small-scale area of which one has intimate knowledge, often defined by natural boundaries, the latter is an abstract concept, less instinctive perhaps, but one that can easily be

aroused. Following this distinction one can trace how the immigrants' local patriotism in all three novels is gradually transformed into 'imperial patriotism'. This occurs when daily contact with one's familiar surrounding (the source of local patriotism), is no longer possible. Naming practices are an expression of an emerging or growing attachment to one's former home. In *Invandrarna*, Karl Oskar names his family's new home Duvemåla after Kristina's childhood home. In *Ankerfeste*, the first Norwegian settlement in the Midwest is called Norway. Both Moberg and Hauge provide several more such examples, which express both local and imperial patriotism. These illustrate that in the Old World man is named after the place he comes from, in the New he names the place after himself,²¹⁷ or the place he comes from, thus creating a link between place of origin and identity. For obvious reasons Lagerlöf's characters are unable to rename villages and sites in Palestine, but they too leave their mark on the place.

The three novels convey a full range of feelings towards the homeland. From total rejection of the 'old' and 'corrupt' (by Moberg's Ulrika), through an ambiguous attachment (Cleng Peerson), to a total rejection of the 'foreign' and the 'different' (in Lagerlöf). In all three texts, however, there are central characters that express devotion to the homeland or embody its highest values, and in *Jerusalem* they actually return home. More importantly, in all three the model for well-being – of the immigrants themselves but to certain extent also of the entire receiving country – is based on the (idealised) former lifestyle imported from the homeland. As in all emigrant novels mentioned in this study, and most emigrant novels in general, the strong patriotic sentiment has a clear national-romantic source to it, since it is always the *rural* that is elevated to become an emblem of the national, and the ideal to aspire to, even in works from the middle of the 20th Century (such as Moberg's). Thus all three novels contain a romantic element. Romanticism as the common denominator of the three novels is used here because among its varied and often contradictory definitions, one finds an interpretation that best illustrates the national-romantic ideology, as Isaiah Berlin observed in his lecture "The Romantics and their roots", in which he lists Romanticism's numerous manifestations: 'Romanticism [...] is the familiar, the sense of one's unique tradition [...] the accustomed sights and sounds of

contented, simple, rural folk – the sane and happy wisdom of rosy-cheeked sons of the soil.’²¹⁸ The ‘Romanticism Triangle’ below does however illustrate that despite this common element – which, it must be stressed, is not based on the traditional labelling of either works or their authors but on the above analysis – the three writers are pulling in different ideological directions. Curiously, though, these different directions do not significantly alter the image of the homeland as it emerges from their novels.



national element remains intact or even strengthened. Thus in the emigrant novel the loss incurred on the homeland is balanced by the acclaim the immigrants win abroad, acclaim which reflects directly on their homeland.

¹ "Mobergs stora bygge färdigt", a review of *Sista brevet till Sverige* by Olof Lagercrantz in *Dagens Nyheter*, 17.10.1959. Quoted in *Perspektiv på utvandrarromanen*. Dokument och studier samlade av Erland och Ulla-Britta Lagerroth. Stockholm: Rabén & Sjögren, 1971, 192.

² Vilhelm Moberg, "Romanen om utvandrarromanen". In: *Berättelser ur min levnad*. Stockholm: Albert Bonniers Förlag, 1968, 295.

³ Interview with Barbro Alving in *Veckojournalen* (nr 33), 1959. Quoted in *Perspektiv på utvandrarromanen*, 48.

⁴ Moberg, "Romanen om utvandrarromanen", 297.

⁵ Moberg, *Berättelser ur min levnad*, 25.

⁶ Philip Holmes, *Vilhelm Moberg*. Boston: Twayne Publishers. A Division of G.K. Hall & Co., 1980, 16, 29.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 55.

⁸ Ingeborg R. Kongslien, *Draumen om fridom og jord. Ein studie i skandinaviske emigrantromanar*. Oslo: Det Norske Samlaget, 1989, 170.

⁹ See p. 76 above.

¹⁰ Sophus Keith Winther, "Moberg and a New Genre for the Emigrant Novel". *Scandinavian Studies*, Vol. 34, No.3, 1962, 178.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 182.

¹² Gunnar Eidevall, *Berättaren Vilhelm Moberg*. Stockholm: Bokförlaget Pan/Norstedts, 1976, 104.

¹³ Holmes, *Vilhelm Moberg*, 112.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 113.

¹⁵ From a review of *The Emigrants (Utvandrarna)* by Walter Johnson. *Scandinavian Studies*, Vol. 24, 1952, 24.

¹⁶ Moberg, "Romanen om utvandrarromanen", 301.

¹⁷ Erland Lagerroth, "Fakta och fiktion i gestaltningen av det amerikanska stoffet". In: *Perspektiv på utvandrarromanen*, 136. Lagerroth notes that Robert's tragic fate balances this picture of success by showing that not all characters could fulfil the ideal.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 139. Lagerroth notes that Peter Cassel and his 25 companions who settled in Iowa in 1845 (see note 23 in Chapter One, pp. 38-39) could have provided the historical precedent for Moberg, although, as he notes, 'inte ens han mottogs av ett så jungfruligt land som Karl Oskar.' (*Ibid.*, 140)

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 140.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 141.

²¹ Lagercrantz. In: *Perspektiv på utvandrarromanen*, 193.

²² *Ibid.*

²³ *Ibid.*, 194.

²⁴ Lagerroth, "Fakta och fiktion...", 142.

²⁵ Vilhelm Moberg: *Utvandrarna*. Stockholm: Albert Bonniers Förlag, 1995 (1949), 7. All subsequent references are to this edition.

²⁶ See above, p. 162.

²⁷ Vilhelm Moberg, *Nybyggarna*. Stockholm: Bonniers Förlag, 1995 (1956), 71. All subsequent references are to this edition.

²⁸ Vilhelm Moberg, *Sista brevet till Sverige*. Stockholm: Bonniers Förlag, 1995 (1959), 257. All subsequent references are to this edition.

²⁹ Rigmor Andersson, "Konflikten mellan dröm och verklighet i Roberts och Kristinas öden". In: *Perspektiv på utvandrarromanen*, 222.

³⁰ Ulrika, the parish prostitute who in America becomes a priest's wife is another example of 'successful' immigration, again demonstrating that if the incentives for emigration are ideologically acceptable to the author – in her case, a desire to escape prejudice and poverty and a justified demand for equality and respect – the characters representing them are rewarded.

³¹ Vilhelm Moberg, *Invandrarna*. Stockholm: Albert Bonniers Förlag, 1995 (1952), 199. All

subsequent references are to this edition.

³² Eidevall, *Berättaren Vilhelm Moberg*, 106, based on Moberg's remarks in *Min svenska historia*.

³³ Lagercrantz, 195.

³⁴ Vilhelm Moberg in an interview with Arne Thorén: 'Hos Vilhelm Moberg i Laguna Beach'. In: *Perspektiv på utvandrarromanen*, 24.

³⁵ Holmes, *Vilhelm Moberg*, 170.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 173.

³⁷ Moberg, *Berättelser ur min levnad*, 122.

³⁸ This will only develop in old age, when he hears of the famine in Småland and sends a shipment of wheat to feed the poor in Ljuder. *SBTV* 224-228.

³⁹ See for example *Inv.* 215-219 compared to *Inv.* 219-222.

⁴⁰ Gillian Tindall, *Countries of the Mind: The Meaning of Places to Writers*. Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1991, 116.

⁴¹ This is followed by a description of the famine in Sweden (*Utv.* 127-129): Adults are ashamed to ask for food and therefore send their children to beg. The situation is similar to the one imagined by Kristina, but it takes place in her homeland. Moberg is perhaps suggesting that exile is a state of mind rather than a geographical situation.

⁴² Arthur Landfors, "Om svensk-amerikanskan". In: *Perspektiv på utvandrarromanen*, 175.

⁴³ See for example *Inv.* 169 for a description of the Mississippi River which is not structured around a comparison to a more familiar phenomenon – i.e. a Swedish river, and *Nyb.* 125-126, for a description of Lake Ki-Chi-Saga.

⁴⁴ Diane Dufva Quantic, *The Nature of the Place. A Study of Great Plains Fiction*. Lincoln and London: Bison Books, University of Nebraska Press, 1997 (1995), 138.

⁴⁵ Holmes, *Vilhelm Moberg*, 122.

⁴⁶ Mircea Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane. The Nature of Religion*. Translated by Willard R. Trask. New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1959 (orig. published 1957), 25.

⁴⁷ Philip Holmes, *Vilhelm Moberg: Utvandarna*. Studies in Swedish Literature No. 6. Dept. of Scandinavian Studies, Hull: University of Hull, 1978, 2nd edition [first edition 1976], 16.

⁴⁸ See above, p. 160.

⁴⁹ Winther, 173.

⁵⁰ E.M. Forster, from a lecture titled "Flat and round characters and 'point of view'". Printed in *Aspects of the Novel*. London: Penguin, 1990 (1927), 137-145.

⁵¹ Not all critics would agree with this statement. Eidevall notes that the end of *Invandarna*, in which Kristina's experience of homelessness is emphasised, clearly indicates that Moberg's main theme is not the heroic and creative act of pioneering, but the mental anguish experienced by the immigrant: 'Tyngdpunkten ligger inte längre på den episka huvudlinjen, hos Karl Oskar; det är den inre utvecklingen och förvandlingen av utvandarna-romangestalterna som blir huvudtemat.' "Emigranteposets tillkomst och tillväxt". In: *Perspektiv på utvandrarromanen*, 31.

⁵² Lars Ljungmark confirms that many Swedish emigrants complained about fellow passengers from other countries with whom they came into contact during the Atlantic crossing. They had a particularly low opinion of the Irish whom they often referred to as "rough and uncivilised." *Swedish Exodus*. Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1980, 80.

⁵³ Leonard Lutwack, *The Role of Place in Literature*. New York: Syracuse University Press, 1984, 32.

⁵⁴ Ulrika is an exception since her prosperity is gained through marriage and her happiness is linked with town life. However, in his pursuit of historical correctness Moberg has avoided depicting a woman as a powerful and independent farmer. Moreover, Ulrika was not an agricultural worker in Sweden and there is therefore no question of her preserving a traditional lifestyle.

⁵⁵ Even before their arrival in America there is indication that the Swedish farmers are made of the right stuff. Faced with cramped and sub-human conditions on board the *Charlotta*, the emigrant farmers' real source of frustration is the fact that they have no work to keep them occupied (*Utv.* 387).

⁵⁶ See also *Nyb.* 410, in which the idea is repeated, this time openly attacking 'lättingen och spekulanten och vigulanten' who try to become rich without doing any work.

⁵⁷ Thomas More, *Utopia*. Mineola, New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1997 (First published in 1516), 38.

⁵⁸ Quantic, 51.

⁵⁹ See p. 53 above for observation made by Buber.

⁶⁰ See for instance *Inv.* 311, *Inv.* 364-365 and *Nyb.* 7.

- ⁶¹ Samuel Nöjd, a Swedish hunter and a vehement spokesman for the Indian cause, accuses white Americans and European settlers of hypocrisy. First they stole the land from the Indians and then began preaching the seventh commandment (*SBTV* 72-73).
- ⁶² This is Moberg's expression, possibly a repetition of the word used by the interviewed settlers. Quoted by Eidevall in "Författaren och hans tryckta källor. Några exempel". In: *Perspektiv på utvandrarromanen*, 113.
- ⁶³ Clive Bush, *The Dream of Reason. American Consciousness and Cultural Achievement from Independence to the Civil War*. London: Edward Arnold, 1977, 240.
- ⁶⁴ Holmes, *Vilhelm Moberg*, 173.
- ⁶⁵ Interview with Barbro Alving in *Veckojournalen* (nr 33), 1959. Quoted in: *Perspektiv på utvandrarromanen*, 47.
- ⁶⁶ Paul Elmen, "Religious Motifs in 'The Emigrants'". *The Swedish Pioneer Historical Quarterly*, Vol. XXIV, 1973, 139-145.
- ⁶⁷ Since Elmen praises her character as an achievement he clearly accepts that in this novel the typical had to be transformed into the idealised in order to fit in with its epic scale.
- ⁶⁸ Moberg, *Berättelser ur min levnad*, 215.
- ⁶⁹ Ibid.
- ⁷⁰ 'Jag ä inte sköldi att hålla vakt över bror min' exclaims Karl Oskar (*Utv.* 111). Holmes, *Vilhelm Moberg: Utvandrarromanen*, 9.
- ⁷¹ Ibid. 22.
- ⁷² Kristina, like the Virgin Mary, gives birth in a makeshift 'home' (*Inv.* 355, 388).
- ⁷³ Moberg gives the vessel's dimensions several times in the text to stress the crowded conditions: 'från fören till aktern, 40 steg på längden och 8 på bredden.' (*Utv.* 268, also on *Utv.* 243, 261, 364). This repetition also suggests that the measurements and layout of the vessel have some symbolic meaning. ('And this is the fashion which thou shalt make it of: The length of the ark shall be three hundred cubits, the breadth of it fifty cubits, and the height of it thirty cubits.' *Genesis* 6:15) Although more spacious, the parallels between the Ark and the brig *Charlotta* are obvious.
- ⁷⁴ Descriptions of the Heavenly Kingdom in *Revelation* (21:1-27, 22:1-3) are another source of longed-for place imagery. When Robert describes America for Arvid the latter has to resort to what he imagines heaven to be like in order to grasp its magnificence. This can be read as Moberg's criticism of the minister for not implanting in his congregation a more positive image of the next world, and by implication, for denying people the consolation of a better future elsewhere: 'Arvid hade aldrig läst någon beskrivning över himmelriket, för han kunde inte läsa, och aldrig hade han hört prosten på predikstolen beskriva himmelen heller, för han talade bara om hur det gick till i helvetet, men om bara hälften av det som stod i Roberts bok var sanning, medan den andra var lögn, så måste den boken handla just om en himmel i denna världn.' (*Utv.* 68)
- ⁷⁵ Moberg, "Romanen om utvandrarromanen", 313-314.
- ⁷⁶ Having followed Robert on the California Trail, Arvid dies after drinking poisoned water: 'Han [Arvid] utvandrade lång väg till sin grav.' (*Nyb.* 321)
- ⁷⁷ Kongslien, *Draumen om fridom og jord*, 214.
- ⁷⁸ Paul White, "Geography, Literature and Migration". In: Russell King, John Connell and Paul White (eds.), *Writing Across Worlds. Literature and Migration*. London: Routledge, 1995, 6-7.
- ⁷⁹ Kristina's willingness to accept Ulrika, first as a fellow human being and later as her closest friend, indicates that Kristina too is 'improved'. Unlike Ulrika, though, she is not altogether transformed.
- ⁸⁰ Andersson, 227.
- ⁸¹ Holmes, *Vilhelm Moberg: Utvandrarromanen*, 8.
- ⁸² Andersson, 227.
- ⁸³ Lutwack, 174.
- ⁸⁴ Ingeborg Kongslien, "Emigration: The Dream of Freedom and Land – And an Existential Quest". In: *Fin(s) de Siècle in Scandinavian Perspective: Studies in Honor of Harald S. Næss*, edited by Faith Ingwersen and Mary Kay Norseng. Columbia, S.C.: Camden House, 1993, 205.
- ⁸⁵ Moberg, *Berättelser ur min levnad*, 16.
- ⁸⁶ Olle Holmberg, "Vilhelm Moberg och vetenskapen". In: *Perspektiv på utvandrarromanen*, 179.
- ⁸⁷ B. Fidjestøl et al. (eds.), *Norsk litteratur i tusen år. Teksthistoriske linjer*. Oslo: Landslaget for norsk undervisning (LNU)/J.W. Cappelens Forlag, 1994, 605.
- ⁸⁸ Odd Kvaal Pedersen, *Gråstein og lengsel. Peilinger i Alfred Huges tema og litterære landskap*. Oslo: Gyldendal Norsk Forlag, 1985, 10.

- ⁸⁹ Kongslien, *Draumen om fridom og jord*, 219.
- ⁹⁰ See p. 12 above.
- ⁹¹ Cleng Peerson was not a prisoner on a warship in Britain during the Napoleonic Wars, and his first mission to America in 1821, as a spy for the Stavanger Quakers, is a disputed historical fact, although there is considerable support for this version. Theodore Blegen, *Norwegian Migration to America*. Vol. I: 1825-1860. Northfield, Minnesota: The Norwegian-American Historical Association, 1931, 27.
- ⁹² Alfred Hauge, "Til leseren", in: *Landkjenning*. Oslo: Gyldendal Norsk Forlag, 1964, 10. All subsequent references are to this edition.
- ⁹³ Alfred Hauge, "Til leseren", in: *Ankerfeste*. Oslo: Gyldendal Norsk Forlag, 1966, 9. All subsequent references are to this edition.
- ⁹⁴ Alfred Hauge, "Ein romanserie tek form. Om Cleng Peerson-trilogien". In: *Norsk Litterær Årbok* 1966. Edited by Leif Mæhle. Oslo: Det Norske Samlaget, 1966, 146.
- ⁹⁵ Ibid.
- ⁹⁶ Kjetil A. Flatin, "Historisk roman – emigrantroman. Genrespørsmål i tre norske verk om utvandringen til Amerika." EDDA, 1977:3, 166.
- ⁹⁷ Hauge, "Ein romanserie tek form.", 146.
- ⁹⁸ Otto F. Kraushaar, "America: Symbol of a Fresh Start". In: Gairdner B. Moment & Otto F. Kraushaar (editors), *Utopias: The American Experience*. Metuchen, N.J., & London: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1980, 14.
- ⁹⁹ Peter Conrad, *Imagining America*. London and Henley: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1980, 5.
- ¹⁰⁰ Odd-Inge Schröder, "Diktning og visjon". In: Odd Kvaal Pedersen (ed.), *Alfred Huges landskap*. Oslo: Lu-Mi Forlag, 1975, 97.
- ¹⁰¹ With the possible exception of Sam Rønnegard's *Salemsborg*.
- ¹⁰² Kongslien, "Emigration: The Dream of Freedom and Land...", 203-212.
- ¹⁰³ Robert Rosenblum, *Modern Painting and the Northern Romantic Tradition: Friedrich to Rothko*. London: Thames and Hudson, 1975, 33.
- ¹⁰⁴ See pp. 88-91 above.
- ¹⁰⁵ Hauge, "Ein romanserie tek form", 144.
- ¹⁰⁶ Kongslien, "Emigration: The Dream of Freedom and Land ...", 206.
- ¹⁰⁷ Kongslien, *Draumen om fridom og jord*, 219.
- ¹⁰⁸ Alfred Hauge, *Hundevakt*. Oslo: Gyldendal Norsk Forlag, 1961, 11. All subsequent references are to this edition.
- ¹⁰⁹ George Fox, the founder of the Society of Friends, called the 'seed' or the 'light' within each person 'that of God in every man'. H. Barbour, "Quakers", in: *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, Vol. 12, New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1987, 129-133. Although less dogmatic than all Christian denominations at the time, the Quaker lifestyle was still too restrictive for freedom-loving Cleng.
- ¹¹⁰ See Moberg's description of Korpamoen on p. 163 above.
- ¹¹¹ This guilt, as Skårdal has observed, is significantly limited to fictional immigrants created by authors who were *not* immigrants themselves. See p. 145 above.
- ¹¹² Dawkins introduced the concept of the new replicator, the meme, as 'a noun that conveys the idea of a unit of cultural transmission.' Richard Dawkins, *The Selfish Gene*. Revised Edition. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989 (1976), 192.
- ¹¹³ Gudrun Hovde Gvåle, "Cleng Peerson". In: *Alfred Huges landskap*, 79.
- ¹¹⁴ Quoted by Mark Holloway in *Heavens on Earth – Utopian Communities in America 1680-1880*. London: Turnstile Press, 1951, 20.
- ¹¹⁵ Lutwack, 2-3.
- ¹¹⁶ Henry Nash Smith, *Virgin Land. The American West as Symbol and Myth*. New York: Vintage Books, 1950, 55.
- ¹¹⁷ Quoted by Odd Kvaal Pedersen, "Vandring med Alfred Hauge". In: *Alfred Huges landskap*, 128.
- ¹¹⁸ Kongslien, *Draumen om fridom og jord*, 175.
- ¹¹⁹ Elbert Russell, *The History of Quakerism*. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1942, 23.
- ¹²⁰ This is the explanation of the fact that they were not plagued with fleas until their meeting with the 'negerbarna' in the Bahamas.
- ¹²¹ Kongslien, *Draumen om fridom og jord*, 191.
- ¹²² There is never a suggestion of similarity to dubious characters such as Erik Janson.
- ¹²³ See Acts 2:44-45: 'And all that believed were together, and had all things common; And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need.' And Acts 4:32-35: 'And

the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common. [...] Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, And laid them down at the apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need.'

¹²⁴ The letter was sent from Illinois, dated January 28, 1838, and was possibly written by Ole Rynning. Blegen, *Norwegian Migration to America*, Vol.I, 41.

¹²⁵ '[...] religion and spiritual experience played a most important role in the life of the Harmony Society, and the social economy of the commune was inspired by the precepts of the New Testament', writes John S. Duss, himself a descendant of the Harmonists, in *The Harmonists. A Personal History*. Philadelphia: Porcupine Press Inc., 1972, xi. Cleng does not seem to be aware of George Rapp's megalomania, which caused him to declare himself a prophet, try to impose celibacy upon the members of the colony and expect the Millennium within his lifetime. Robert S. Fogarty, *Dictionary of American Communal and Utopian History*. Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1980, pp. 97-98.

¹²⁶ The Zoarites, a German sect led by Joseph Baumeler, established the communistic settlement of Zoar in Ohio in 1819. Like the Rappites they came to America in the hope of finding freedom of worship. Holloway, 95-100.

¹²⁷ Robert Owen, a Welsh businessman, developed humanitarian theories, which he first practised in Scotland. He believed people were products of their environment, and it was therefore crucial to provide a healthy environment in order to create a prosperous society. He developed a new social system with 'Happiness of mankind' as its goal, but his attempts to get legal reforms through Parliament failed. Seeing the success of the religious colonies in America, Owen wanted to prove that religion need not necessarily be the basis for a successful commune. His vision was to divide all people into villages of ca. 1200 people, each village self-sufficient in manufacture and agriculture. Children will be taken from their parents at a young age to be brought up by the state, and private property will not be allowed at any time. Owen's anti-religious ideas made it almost impossible for him to raise funds for his communes, and those that were established were short-lived. Everett Webber, *Escape to Utopia – The Communal Movement in America*. New York: Hastings House Publishers, 1959, 135-138.

¹²⁸ Schröder, 90.

¹²⁹ Pedersen, *Gråstein og lengsel*, 15.

¹³⁰ Conditions in America, as they are described in the second and third volumes, are often just as vile as those on the prison ships. However, the element of choice and the freedom to move in order to improve one's fate, mark a significant difference in attitude towards one's own situation.

¹³¹ The word 'Babel' resembles the Hebrew for 'confuse'.

¹³² In *Landkjenning*, 20, for example, the sloop is not compared to the Ark but *is* the pilgrims' Ark.

¹³³ *The Vinland Sagas – The Norse Discovery of America*. Translated by Magnus Magnusson and Hermann Pálsson. Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1985 (1965), 85-86. In a footnote the translators explain that the word for wheat used in the original literally means 'self-sown wheat', which further highlights the resemblance to Cleng's words. A similar image appears in *Gylfaginning*, in which Snorri describes the green earth that will emerge out of the sea after Ragnarok, and 'Crops will grow unsown'. Snorri Sturluson, *Edda*. Translated and introduced by Anthony Faulkes. London: Everyman Classics, J.M. Dent & Sons, 1987, 56.

¹³⁴ Flatin, 167.

¹³⁵ Ibid., 169.

¹³⁶ Hauge, "Ein romanserie tek form." 143.

¹³⁷ Ibid., 147.

¹³⁸ Ingeborg Kongslie, "Immigrant Literature: Double Perspectives and Cultural Conflicts". In: *Norwegian-American Essays*. Edited by Øyvind T. Gulliksen, David C. Mauk and Dina Toflsby. Oslo: NAHA-Norway, 1996, 233.

¹³⁹ Vivi Edström, *Selma Lagerlöfs litterära profil*. Stockholm: Rabén & Sjögren, 1986, 86.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., 55.

¹⁴¹ Ibid., 57.

¹⁴² Lagerlöf's article appeared in *Svenska Jerusalemsföreningens tidskrift*, and is quoted by Vivi Edström in "Att finna stilen. En studie i Jerusalems framväxt". *Lagerlöfstudier* 4. Lund, 1971, 9.

¹⁴³ Vivi Edström, *Selma Lagerlöf*. Stockholm: Natur och Kultur, 1991, 53.

- ¹⁴⁴ Ibid., 54.
- ¹⁴⁵ Edström, *Selma Lagerlöfs litterära profil*, 59.
- ¹⁴⁶ Ibid.
- ¹⁴⁷ Letter dated 1.12.1899. In: *Mammas Selma. Selma Lagerlöfs brev til modern*. Edited by Ying Toijer-Nilsson. Stockholm: Albert Bonniers Förlag, 1998, 160.
- ¹⁴⁸ Ibid., 159-179.
- ¹⁴⁹ Ibid., 183-4.
- ¹⁵⁰ Ibid., 186.
- ¹⁵¹ Yi-Fu Tuan, *Topophilia. A Study of Environmental Perception, Attitudes and Values*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1990 (1974), 64, 65.
- ¹⁵² Letter from Brumana dated 10.4.1900. In: *Mammas Selma*, 191.
- ¹⁵³ *Selma Lagerlöf: Brev 1 1871-1902*. Edited by Ying Toijer-Nilsson. Selma Lagerlöf-sällskapet, Lund: Gleerups Förlag, 1967, 247.
- ¹⁵⁴ Letter to Björnson dated 12.12.1901. In: *Selma Lagerlöf: Brev 1*, 258.
- ¹⁵⁵ Edström, *Selma Lagerlöfs litterära profil*, 64.
- ¹⁵⁶ Letter to Björnson dated 12.12.1901. In: *Selma Lagerlöf: Brev 1*, 258.
- ¹⁵⁷ Edström, *Selma Lagerlöf*, 8.
- ¹⁵⁸ Ibid., 12.
- ¹⁵⁹ In *Jerusalem*, however, there is no question of religious persecution.
- ¹⁶⁰ The pastor's authority is undermined because his weak character does not allow him to prevent emigration. However, the validity of the values he represents is never questioned.
- ¹⁶¹ Selma Lagerlöf, *Jerusalem I: I Dalarna*. Stockholm: Fabel Bokförlag, 1994 (First published 1901), 56. All subsequent references are to this edition.
- ¹⁶² Erland Lagerroth, *Selma Lagerlöfs Jerusalem. Revolutionär sekterism mot fäderneärvd bondeordning*. Skrifter utgivna av vetenskaps-societeten i Lund, Lund: CWK Gleerup, 1966, 11.
- ¹⁶³ Ibid., 10.
- ¹⁶⁴ Edström, *Selma Lagerlöfs litterära profil*, 61.
- ¹⁶⁵ See p. 55 above on Zion.
- ¹⁶⁶ Lagerroth, *Selma Lagerlöfs Jerusalem*, 16.
- ¹⁶⁷ Based on Hellgum's assertion that his Chicago congregation of like-minded worshippers is 'den rätta, heliga Jerusalem som är nederkommet av himmelen.' (Vol. I, 164)
- ¹⁶⁸ This is a clear reference to similar biblical scenes such as: 'as I was among the captives by the river of Chebär [...] the heavens were opened, and I saw visions of God.' (*Ezekiel* 1:1) See also *John* 1:51, *Rev* 4:1 and *Rev* 19:11.
- ¹⁶⁹ Lagerroth, *Selma Lagerlöfs Jerusalem*, 24.
- ¹⁷⁰ In a letter to her publisher, Karl Otto Bonnier, dated 23.9.1901, Lagerlöf rather hesitantly suggested using such a painting on the cover of the first volume. Although she does not believe it will be 'vidare vacker', her suggestion nonetheless indicates the significance of this scene to the novel as a whole. *Selma Lagerlöf: Brev 1*, 244.
- ¹⁷¹ Lagerroth, *Selma Lagerlöfs Jerusalem*, 22.
- ¹⁷² Ibid., 38.
- ¹⁷³ Lutwack, 214-15.
- ¹⁷⁴ Selma Lagerlöf, *Jerusalem II: I det heliga landet*. Stockholm: Fabel Bokförlag, 1994 (First published in 1902, revised edition 1909), 7. All subsequent references are to this edition.
- ¹⁷⁵ Bertha Spafford Vester, *Our Jerusalem. An American Family in the Holy City 1881-1949*. Lebanon: Middle East Export Press, 1950, 187.
- ¹⁷⁶ In a letter to her mother sent from Haifa and dated 26 March 1900, Lagerlöf is relieved to be in 'civiliserade förhållanden igen', by which she refers to the Germans who have established 'en riktig trefflig koloni här med stora stenhus och trädgårdar.' *Mammas Selma*, 188. The German colony in Jaffa was established by a similar group of German Templers.
- ¹⁷⁷ Chris Tiffin and Alan Lawson (eds.), *De-scribing Empire. Post-colonialism and Textuality*. London and New York: Routledge, 1994, 5.
- ¹⁷⁸ Lagerroth, *Selma Lagerlöfs Jerusalem*, 47.
- ¹⁷⁹ *Mammas Selma*, 184.
- ¹⁸⁰ *Selma Lagerlöf: Brev 1*, 269.
- ¹⁸¹ Jakob H. Grønbaek, "Lewis Larsson. A Swede in Jerusalem in the First Half of the Twentieth Century". In: Egon Keck, Svend Søndergaard and Ellen Wulff (eds.), *Living Waters – Scandinavian*

Orientalistic Studies. Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum Press, 1990, 76.

¹⁸² Ibid., 79.

¹⁸³ Spafford Vester, 185.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid., 187.

¹⁸⁵ Helga Dudman and Ruth Kark, *The American Colony. Scenes from a Jerusalem Saga*. Jerusalem: Carta, 1998, 114.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid., 113.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid., 106.

¹⁸⁸ Letter dated 6 March 1900. *Mammas Selma*, 185.

¹⁸⁹ In her memoirs Spafford Vester recounts the events that led to the removal of coffins from the Colony's section in the American Cemetery, caused – like so many other disasters in the Colony's history – by the hostility of the American consul towards the Colony. In her account, however, no Swedes were involved. See *Our Jerusalem*, pp. 169, 215–217.

¹⁹⁰ Eyvind Johnson, *Se dig inte om!*, Stockholm: Albert Bonniers Förlag, 1950 (1936), 87.

¹⁹¹ *Selma Lagerlöf: Brev 1*, 269–270.

¹⁹² Kenneth R. Olwig, "A British Italy in the North: Landscape, *landskap*, and the body". In: Anders Linde-Laursen and Jan Olof Nilsson (eds.), *Nordic Landscapes. Cultural studies of place*. Nord 1995:15, Lund: The Nordic Council, 1995, 156.

¹⁹³ Peter Preston and Paul Simpson-Housley (eds.), *Writing the City: Eden, Babylon and the New Jerusalem*. London: Routledge, 1994, 2.

¹⁹⁴ Note that Moberg uses the very same symbol, but does not associate water with the homeland. Instead it is a symbol of life itself.

¹⁹⁵ Lagerroth, *Selma Lagerlöfs Jerusalem*, 42.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid., 45.

¹⁹⁷ *Mammas Selma*, 187.

¹⁹⁸ It has been suggested earlier that Lagerlöf chose to overlook tensions within the Colony. This episode is the only, perhaps unintentional, indication of some form of inequality, since it is implied that the Swedes were not allowed to sing in their native language.

¹⁹⁹ Lagerroth, *Selma Lagerlöfs Jerusalem*, 12.

²⁰⁰ Edström, *Selma Lagerlöfs litterära profil*, 62.

²⁰¹ Ibid., 77.

²⁰² Victor Turner and Edith Turner, *Image and Pilgrimage in Christian Culture. Anthropological Perspectives*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1978, 6.

²⁰³ Ibid., 6.

²⁰⁴ Ibid., 8.

²⁰⁵ Edström, *Selma Lagerlöf*, 65.

²⁰⁶ Lagerroth, *Selma Lagerlöfs Jerusalem*, 61.

²⁰⁷ Edström, *Selma Lagerlöf*, 65.

²⁰⁸ Quoted by Edström in *Selma Lagerlöfs litterära profil*, 210.

²⁰⁹ The American Colony has been turned into a hotel several decades ago, but is still owned by the Spafford family.

²¹⁰ Another Nobel laureate, S. J. Agnon, known for his admiration of Scandinavian literature, has many years after Lagerlöf written about turn-of-the-century Jerusalem in his novel *Tmol Shilshom* ("The Day Before Yesterday", 1945). The interesting and ironic point about Agnon's portrayal of Jerusalem is that although the book was written in Jerusalem by a resident of the city, it is reminiscent of European descriptions of the Levant. A direct influence by Lagerlöf is difficult to prove, but examples from his novel will illustrate that a literary text about a place can have as powerful an impact as an immediate experience of the very same place. In other words, Lagerlöf has established a tradition of a literary turn-of-the-century Jerusalem. Yizhak Kumer, a young and idealistic Eastern European immigrant, arrives in Palestine and finds himself in the midst of sectarian feuds and divisions – this time among Jews. Like Lagerlöf, Agnon presents a hot and neglected Jaffa and an arid and chaotic Jerusalem. The novel is reminiscent of *Jerusalem* not just in atmosphere but also in specific images. Yizhak's first impression of Jerusalem is, despite warnings, exhilarating, much like Birger Larsson's: 'Suddenly the wall of Jerusalem appeared in front of him, laced with red fire, woven in gold, surrounded by blue clouds mixed with grey, that notch and engrave golden green shapes in choice silver, shining brass and violet alloy.' (190) Soon, though, the city's true character emerges. It is a place where the 'sun burns like a fire and the refuse exudes an odour and the city is engulfed by

sadness and the clumps of mud hit your feet, and you hop upon the hills and jump upon the rocks like those reeking goats, and water is scarce, and no matter where you turn you encounter either waste and filth or beard and earlocks.' S.J. Agnon, *Tmol Shilshom*. In: *Collected Writings*, Vol. 5. Tel Aviv: Schocken Publishing House, 1968, (First published 1945), 156. My translation.

²¹¹ Edström, "Att finna stilen...", 24.

²¹² In his narrative Cleng Peerson is rather ambiguous about his role as a 'hero'; nonetheless he emerges as one in the novel.

²¹³ This changes with the second generation, but only briefly commented upon in *Sista brevet till Sverige*.

²¹⁴ White, 3.

²¹⁵ Ibid.

²¹⁶ Tuan, 101.

²¹⁷ In the final volume of Moberg's tetralogy, Karl Oskar's children change the name of the farm from 'Nya Duvemåla' to *Nelson Settlement* (SBTS 257).

²¹⁸ Isaiah Berlin, "The Romantics and their roots". From a series of lectures on Romanticism delivered in 1965, printed in the TLS, February 19, 1999, p.13.

CONCLUSION

In the modern era, and particularly in the 19th Century, attachment to a single place appeared to be diminishing while the importance of movement and mobility increased, in much the same way as communications technology in our own time gradually replaces mobility as a prominent feature of life. This development was the result of centralisation processes as well as economic changes and improvements in transportation. The revolutionary concept of mobility after centuries of attachment to a single place, complemented by the opportunities – real and imaginary – offered by the New World, are the major psychological factors in the mass movement of people in the eighteen hundreds.

The historical phenomenon of emigration has produced a rhetoric that both reflects the process and enhances it, by adding a spiritual and/or ideological dimension which is not necessarily an integral part of the concrete act of emigration. That material considerations and a somewhat abstract faith in the future, associated mainly with North America, fuelled emigration from Europe is an indisputable fact. And yet the language of emigration draws on earlier prototypes, mainly biblical stories and, in the Scandinavian context, on what has been termed ‘local’ (*i.e.* specifically Scandinavian) historical/mythological sources. The analysis of this language suggested that the emigrants themselves and their contemporary observers preferred biblical imagery for spiritual and political reasons. In many cases it was simply the rhetoric they were immersed in from childhood. On the other hand, *literary* accounts of emigration, mainly but not only those written in retrospect, and most importantly those written in the emigrants’ country of origin and in their native language, are also drawing on ‘local’ (or national) imagery. By alluding or directly referring to Norse history and myth, either concurrently with biblical references or as an alternative source of imagery, authors may strengthen the bond between fictional emigrants and their country of birth, although the narrative itself ultimately deals with the severing of ties, physical if not mental, between emigrant and homeland.

The emigrant novel is commonly understood to pay particular attention to themes such as the desire for economic and religious freedom and the struggle to adjust to new surroundings. These themes determine the plot of the novel. Its *underlying* themes, however, often deal with other issues. Many emigrant novels, even those written in the latter half of the 20th Century, describe a time or a situation in which attachment to place is central in the characters' lives, and mobility a threat to a stable *modus vivendi*. Leonard Lutwack writes: 'Place loss, place devaluation, has been without question one of the principle motifs of literature over the last one hundred years'.¹ This, however, is not entirely accurate of the values conveyed in most Scandinavian emigrant novels, expressing as they do a traditional outlook on rootedness, which incidentally may be one of the reasons for their popularity. Typical of the Scandinavian emigrant novel is the authors' attempt to trace the sense of rootlessness not so much in the phenomenon's psychological and philosophical background, but in the actual movement of people. Hence the emigrant novel's tendency to be based on historical figures and events, or on documented historical material.

As all the novels examined in this study present the traditional rural lifestyle – as defined in the national-romantic ethos – as the ideal, they express, to varying degrees, a rejection of mobility, mental as well as physical. Yet many accept that maintaining a traditional lifestyle required just that: when the agrarian 'idyll' (a romantic construct rather than a reality) gave way to industrialisation and urbanisation, the only way to preserve it was to transfer that idyll to another part of the world. Consequently, when literary characters emigrate with the intention of preserving an agrarian lifestyle, they are portrayed as representatives of all that is good about the homeland. Since they are protecting national values, they emerge heroic in the national context. Although this study has attempted to demonstrate that in Scandinavian literature the emigrant novel places greater emphasis on questions of specific national and ethnic identity, the universality of the experience of uprooting and migration is acknowledged by many authors, and accordingly their characters are presented as heroic in a timeless and global sense as well. One such character is Moberg's Karl Oskar – an exemplary figure to the whole of mankind, he is at the

same time a paragon of 'Swedishness'. Curiously, although as collectives, and due mostly to their role as bearers of traditional values, fictional immigrants succeed in the receiving country, at least in material matters, as individuals their experience of immigration tends to be tragic. Aksel Sandemose sums up this sentiment: 'Gjør aldri deg selv til emigrant. Det er meget vanskelig å gjøre seg selv ulykkelig, men med anstrengelse og god vilje kan man greie det. En sikker metode er emigrasjonen.'²

Thus many authors present an ambiguous view of emigration: critical of the emigrants on the one hand, sympathetic on the other. Hamsun's *Landstrykere* forms the exception that confirms the rule. As in other emigrant novels, the narrator views emigration with suspicion, but unlike other narrators he does not accept that emigration can guarantee the preservation (or re-establishment) of the agricultural idyll that was under threat in the homeland. Like many fictional immigrants Hamsun's characters experience the pain of homelessness. But whereas they fail to import traditional agrarian values to America, other immigrants do so with varying degrees of success, and more importantly – with the narrator's blessing.

If the emigrant novel is accepted as a sub-genre that is closely related to the 'national' novel, the imagery used in it is invariably linked to the author's approach to questions such as patriotism and ethnicity. Thus the choice of imagery that enriches the emigration narrative reflects not only personal taste but also a certain ideological outlook. The ambiguity of many authors towards emigration is occasionally expressed in the gap between the characters' conceptions (or preconceptions) of the longed-for place, and those of the narrator. Generally, while characters imagine the foreign setting in utopian terms, the narrator's attitude is more cautious, occasionally even dystopian. As the novel progresses, however, both characters and narrator attribute the homeland with the utopian qualities the characters sought elsewhere. The specific images used to convey these notions are often drawn from what has been termed biblical 'place events'. Prior to emigration North America is thought of as Canaan, the Promised Land, an image of political and economic well-being as well as spiritual contentment. For groups of like-minded emigrants, motivated mainly or solely by religious visions, the frequently used image

of the longed-for place is that of the Heavenly Jerusalem, due to its association with a collective of the spiritually elevated. In accounts of emigration to Latin America and the Pacific Islands, the dominant image is the original Paradise, with its emphasis on carefree plenitude, although this image of Paradise, or the Garden of Eden, is not absent from dreams about the north of the continent as well. As for the images that describe the experience of emigration – as opposed to its destination – the *Exodus* narrative provides valuable parallels which are often alluded or directly referred to. The story of the Flood and Noah's Ark is another such example, although less frequently used. Whichever image shaped the dream, in many novels the encounter with the harsh reality of the new place is perceived as and described with images of Hell. Disillusionment hastens the process of reversing the location of the longed-for place, and the East-West axis becomes a West-East axis as the homeland emerges as the (lost) Paradise.

This is the general pattern to which there are countless exceptions. In fact, the analysis of important texts such as Bojer's *Vor egen stamme* has shown that biblical imagery need not be an inseparable part of the emigrant novel. Since the emigrant novel appeals to the national sentiment of its readers, references or allusions to the Norse past may be just as effective, if not more. The biblical imagery in many emigrant novels is therefore a component of the sub-genre's convention, but not necessarily an essential one.

Criticism (of either the homeland or the emigrants), commendation, commemoration, or a combination of these, perhaps a desire to document or educate – the author's objective with the novel is crucial to the presentation of events. Nonetheless there are certain patterns that most writers adhere to regardless of their stated or veiled intentions. These patterns are both structural and thematic – relating to descriptions of uprooting and settlement in the new land, and the assessment of the psychological impact of these processes. Since the emigrant novel reflects the author's views it is wrong to claim that all emigrant novels express the same ideology, but again there are striking similarities in the treatment of issues such as the piety and moral robustness of the national group in question. Although in many texts the longed-for

place is initially described in relation to the needs, material and spiritual, of the potential emigrants, it gradually emerges that since the immigrants bring with them the superior values of the homeland, it is in fact the receiving country that needs them. Their contribution of virtues such as diligence and cleanliness makes them, from the longed-for place's perspective, the 'longed-for people'. It is therefore possible to conclude that although emigrant novels (and novels with an emigration theme) are not necessarily associated with a particular ideology, the Scandinavian emigrant novel has as its point of departure the central role of the homeland in the formation of mentality, identity and character. Novels about emigration ultimately rarely travel beyond national boundaries even if their characters do.

The unique formula of the emigrant novel allows its writer to create a myth without serious deviation from historical fact. Authors fulfil their obligations to historical verisimilitude without compromising their literary aspirations, because the tendency to mythologise is more apparent in the characters and less in the plot. At the same time they perform a triple role in relation to the reading public: the author instructs and educates readers by providing historical data; appeals to their national sentiment and strengthens their bond with the nation's past and ancestors, and finally provides rewarding entertainment in the form of an adventure story that contains dramatic struggles and achievements.

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In parallel with the European territorial expansion in the New World, man's position in the relationship with the earth has changed from dependency or antagonistic co-operation to a confident, occasionally abusive supremacy. The novelistic (and general) tendency to place man, and in this specific context the immigrant, in the centre is contrary to the needs of the earth itself. A central theme in emigrant novels is the presentation of the receiving country as potentially destructive for the immigrants. Survival depends on their ability to subdue their 'host' and turn it into a hospitable (*i.e.* familiar) landscape. Yet from an ecological point of view the immigrants are those who are potentially destructive for the receiving country. This

issue has been touched upon only fleetingly, mainly in connection with its absence from the majority of emigrant novels. However, due to its environmental and political urgency, a possible subject for further research is the gradual infiltration of ecological awareness into literary texts, specifically those that deal with human mobility.

¹ Leonard Lutwack, *The Role of Place in Literature*. New York: Syracuse University Press, 1984, 184.

² Aksel Sandemose, *Det svundne er en drøm*. Oslo: Den norske Bokklubben, Aschehoug & Co., 1983 (1946), 58.

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